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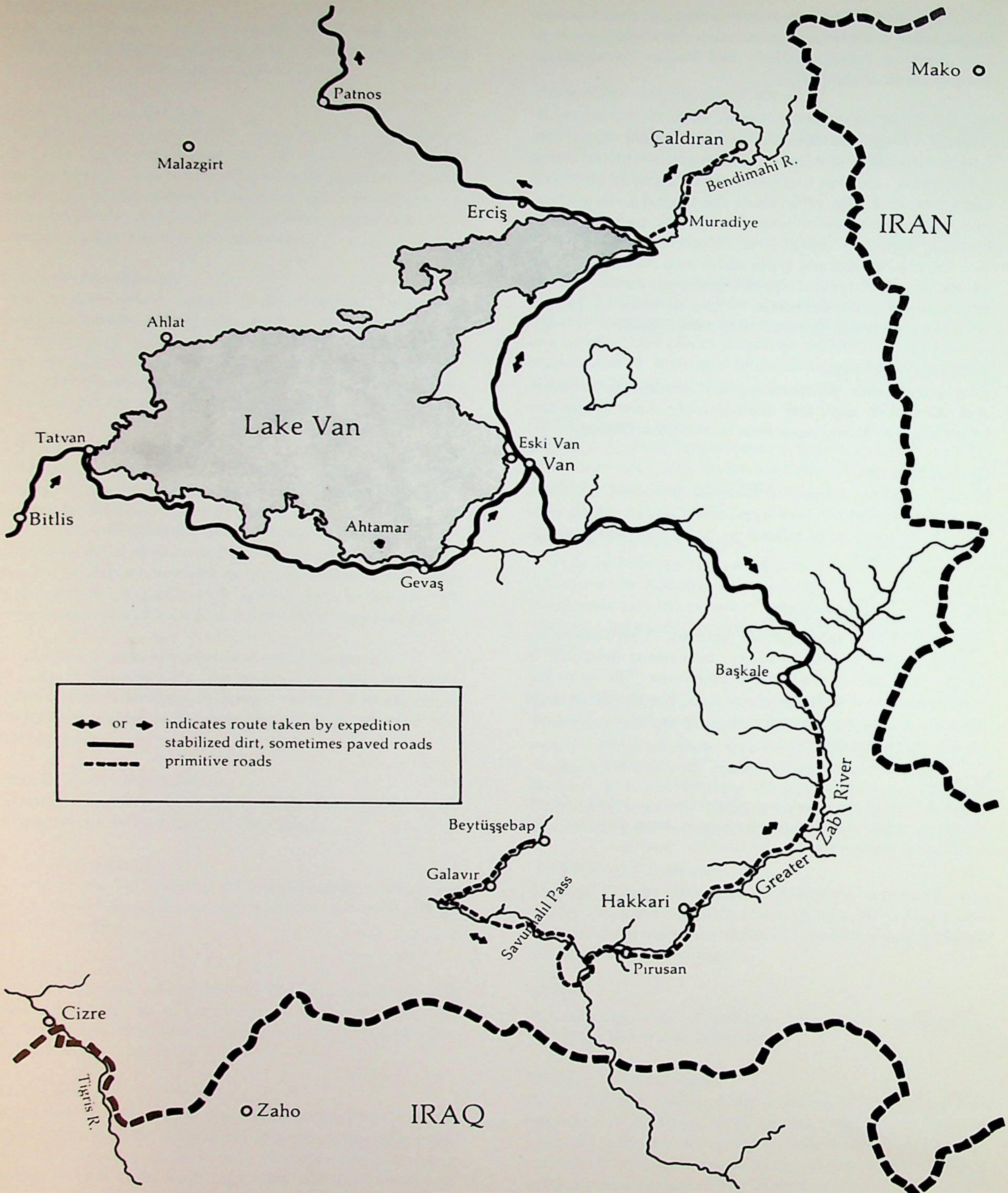
Photographs of textiles in the Textile Museum Collection are by Raymond L. Schwartz and Osmund L. Varela.

The views expressed by the authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Textile Museum.

front and back cover: Detail of a Kurdish kilim from the Van-Hakkari region. Two widths sewn together. One panel 28-29 inches wide; other panel 29-30 inches wide. Length (warp direction) 87-88 inches, plus approximately 8-inch braided fringe at either end. Weft count: 44-46 per inch (2.5 cm). Warp count: 10 per inch (2.5 cm). T. M. 1973.5 Color transparency by Raymond L. Schwartz.


Patnos
Malazgirt
Çaldıran
Bendimahi R.
Mako
Erciş
Muradiye
IRAN
Ahlat
Lake Van
Tatvan
Eski Van
Van
Bitlis
Ahtamar
Gevaş
Başkale
or indicates route taken by expedition
stabilized dirt, sometimes paved roads
primitive roads
Greater Zab River
Beytüşşebap
Galavır
Savuşdalil Pass
Hakkari
Pırusan
Cizre
Tigris R.
Zaho
IRAQ

KURDISH KILIM WEAVING IN THE VAN-HAKKARI DISTRICT OF EASTERN TURKEY

Anthony N. Landreau

Kurdish tribesmen of the Van-Hakkari region in the extreme Southeast portion of present-day Turkey still produce kilims[1] of a traditional geometric style often characterized by a dark blue ground (see cover). Information on the weaving in this remote and until very recently inaccessible territory has been scarce.

In June-July 1973 I had the privilege of travelling to this area with Dr. May H. Beattie and Ralph S. Yohe as part of a research expedition sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Near East Research Center and the National Rug and Textile Foundation. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Beattie for the use of her very valuable notes, and to both Dr. Beattie and Mr. Yohe for sharing their observations and information with me.

For centuries the area under discussion consisted of a settled Armenian population in strongholds around Lake Van (Vaspourakan) and to the North. Kurdish nomadic groups controlled the almost impenetrable mountains around the lake, particularly to the South. These two groups have largely shared the area, along with such minorities as the Nestorians in the Hakkari district, although nominally it has been held by many conquerors, such as Persians, Mongols and the Turks. Various invaders have occupied enclaves around Van from time to time; for example Ahlat (Akhlat) was an Arab-held town prior to the Selcuks.

Today the area is part of modern Turkey. The villages on the North side of the lake are predominantly Turkish, whereas those South and East of the lake are inhabited principally by Kurds,[2] whose ancestors were from the Hakkari tribe that invaded the region in the 13th century and controlled most of it until the middle of the 19th century. (Fig. 1)

The Kurds are no longer strictly nomadic. Those who are still shepherds abandon their villages only during the summer to live in tents and care for their flocks of sheep and goats on the high summer pastures or *Yaylas.* (Fig. 2) Some older people are often left behind to tend the village. Around Van, but seldom in the Hakkari area, are agricultural centers which are inhabited all year long. Many younger men work in the towns during the summer. (Figs. 3-4)

Fig. 1. Map of Van-Hakkari region. Drawn by K. M. Jungjohann.

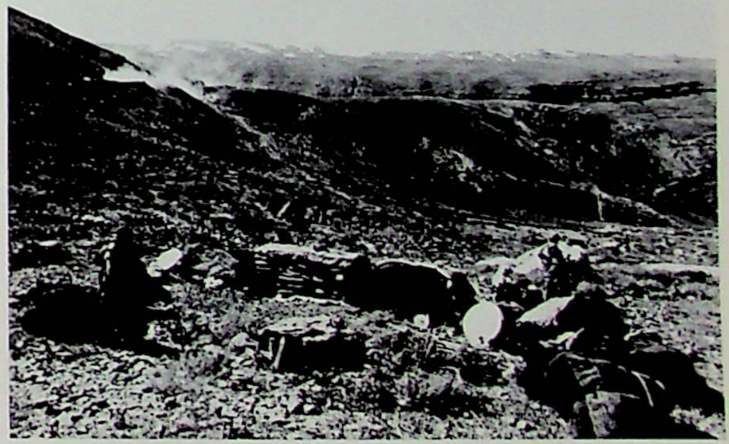


Fig. 2. Encampment of Kurds beyond Savurhalıl pass, heading for summer pastures with belongings in woven bags and wrapped in kilims and rugs.

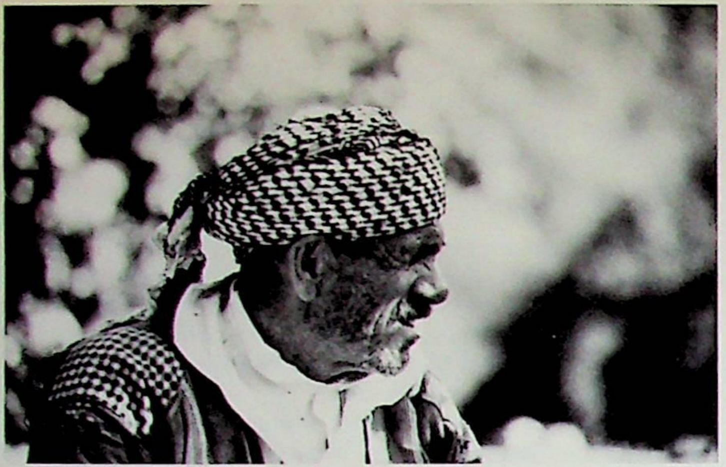


Fig. 3 Kurdish man near Hakkari.

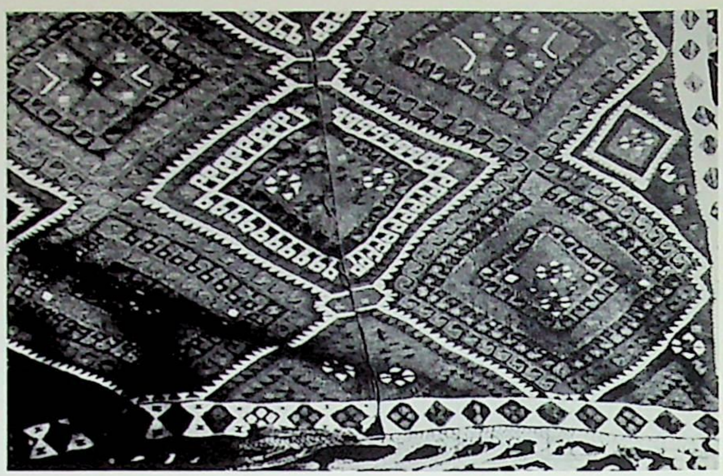


Fig. 5. Kilim at Pırusan, a village abandoned except for a few elders during the summer. Photographed by Ralph S. Yohe.

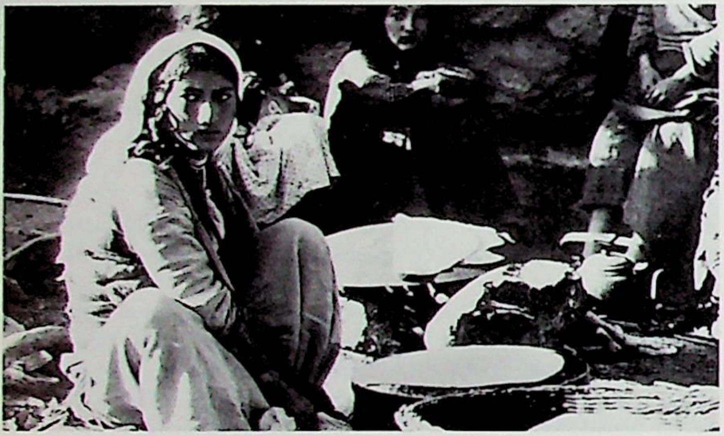


Fig. 4 Kurdish girl of marriageable age, about 12, making flat bread at Galavır.

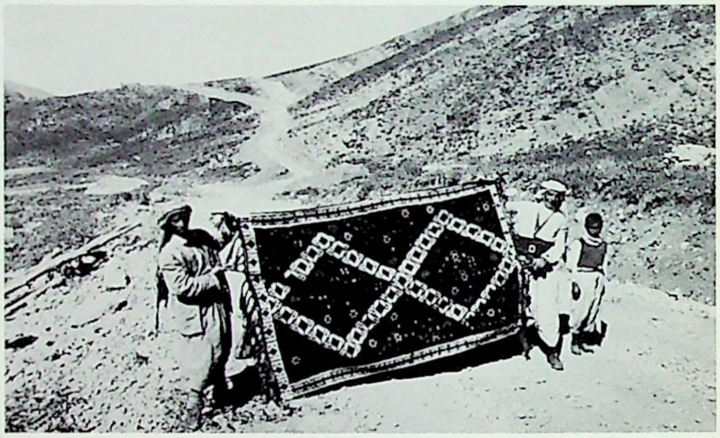


Fig. 6. Kilim at the encampment near Savurhalıl pass.

Unlike many Turkish villages today where commercial pile-rug weaving may be observed throughout the year, weaving is done mostly in winter, commencing with the snows in late September-early October and ending with the thaw about mid-April. While some kilims and plain-weave bags are made in the *Yaylas* during the summer, weaving assumes a secondary role during that busy season. (Fig 5) Spinning and weaving are female occupations, taught to girls at an early age. Men, who will not normally do women's work, often show sudden interest when a photographer is near.

Our party was not always well received South of Van. We invariably had to work fast, and where we were not threatened, it was considered extremely ridiculous for us to be so concerned with the mundane details of everyday women's chores. At Galavır we were able to work for only about an hour before restlessness set in. At the encampment beyond Savurhalıl Pass we were fortunately able to get a few pictures before being ordered to put away our cameras and leave or risk being shot. It is difficult to reach many of the *Yaylas* to the South. We had more time to work at Van and Çaldıran, but it was seldom possible to make all the desired observations or to ask many pertinent questions. Nevertheless, we believe we were quite fortunate to be able to gather the essential material.

The predominant color in many of the kilims and rugs of Turkey seems to be red of various shades. Prior to the synthetic dye period red was usually derived from the madder plant. Kilims of the Van-Hakkari area have darker, some might say a more somber, cast, owing to the common use of a dark blue ground color which originally may have been natural indigo. (Fig. 6) In some cases kilim designs are based on wide stripes of red, white and blue. (Fig. 7) The palette of the older kilims seems limited for the most part to dark and light blue, red, white and dark brown, while oranges and purples are introduced into newer examples. Diamond and hexagon forms, often with "latch hooks" are common motifs usually lined up in columns, in a grid or in concentric diamonds. (Fig. 8)

It is probably that kilims similar to the ones of this region are woven in adjacent territories across the borders in Iran, and to some extent Iraq. Since Kurdistan has been

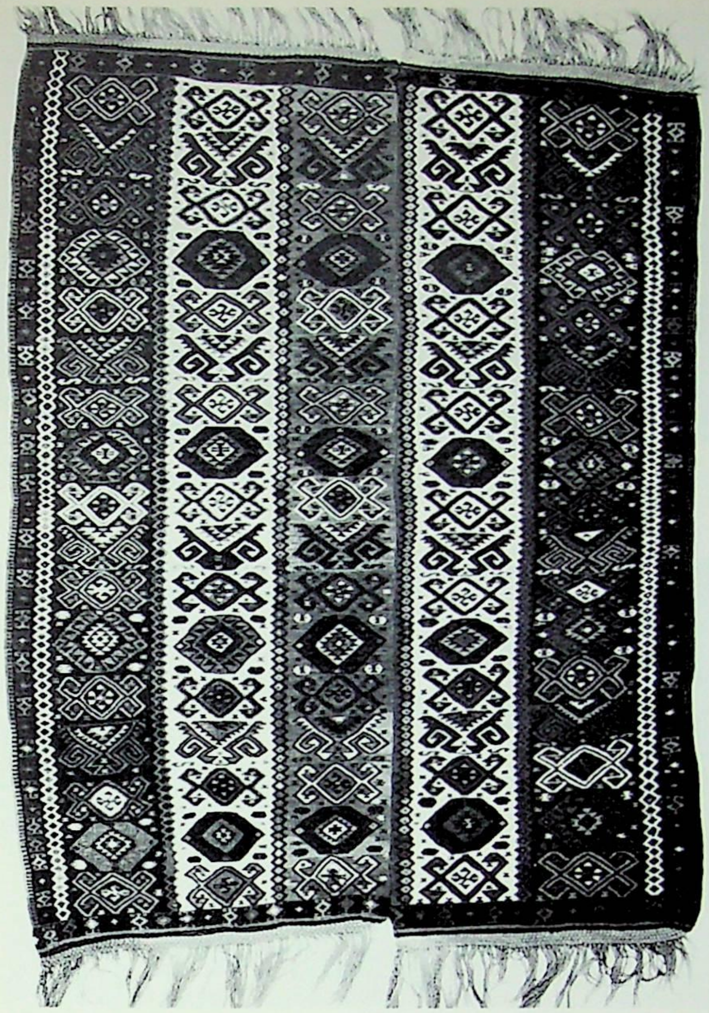


Fig. 7. Striped kilim obtained in Van. Two widths sewn together. Width, one panel 33-34 inches; other panel 27 inches. Length (warp direction) 85-86 inches, plus approximately 8-inch braided fringe at both ends. Weft count: 43-44 per inch (2.5 cm). Warp count: 9-9-1/2 per inch (2.5 cm). Ralph S. Yohe Collection. Photograph by Raymond L. Schwartz.

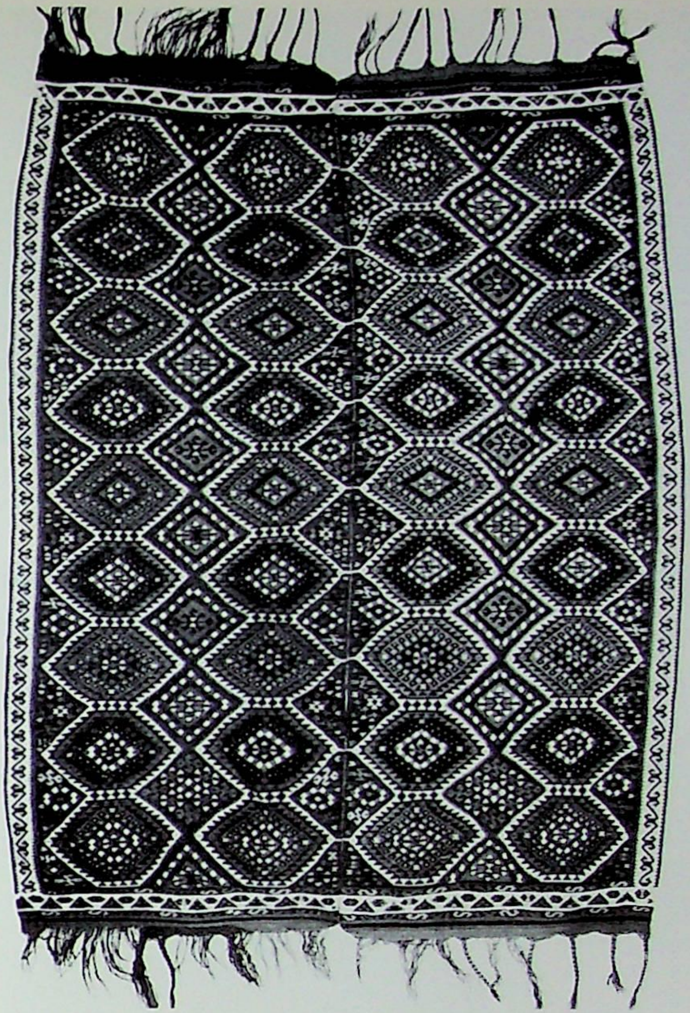


Fig. 8. Kilim obtained in Van. Possibly an older example, containing metallic thread—limited palette of dark blue, bluish red, dark brown and white. Two widths sewn together. Width, one panel 29-30 inches; other panel, 30-31 inches. Length (warp direction) 83-84 inches, plus approximately 8-inch braided fringe at both ends. Weft count: 48-52 per inch (2.5 cm). Warp count: 11 per inch (2.5 cm). Ralph S. Yohe Collection. Photograph by Raymond L. Schwartz.

divided by modern national boundaries, movements across borders have been controlled. Even today crossing the border is not altogether impossible and smuggling persists as a winter male occupation. According to one Kurd in Van, the best kilims of the type described in this article are woven in Iran. While this statement does not seem unreasonable, first-hand investigation is needed. The weaving village of Çaldıran is about 12 miles from the Iranian border.

Dr. Beattie has noted the similarity between kilims of the Van-Hakkari area and some she has seen in Baghdad in Iraq. (Fig. 9) These could have been made in the *Jazirah*, the Northern lands between the Tigris and the Euphrates in Turkey and Iraq. Gaziantep has had a reputation as a kilim center, but it is not known whether the kilims from there are like the ones from Van. It is more reasonable to place the pieces seen in Baghdad further to the East. They are certainly similar to the Van pieces and it is interesting to note that the Hakkari region along the upper reaches of the Greater Zab river, which feeds the Tigris, is in close proximity to the central Diyar Rabi'ah area of the *Jazirah*

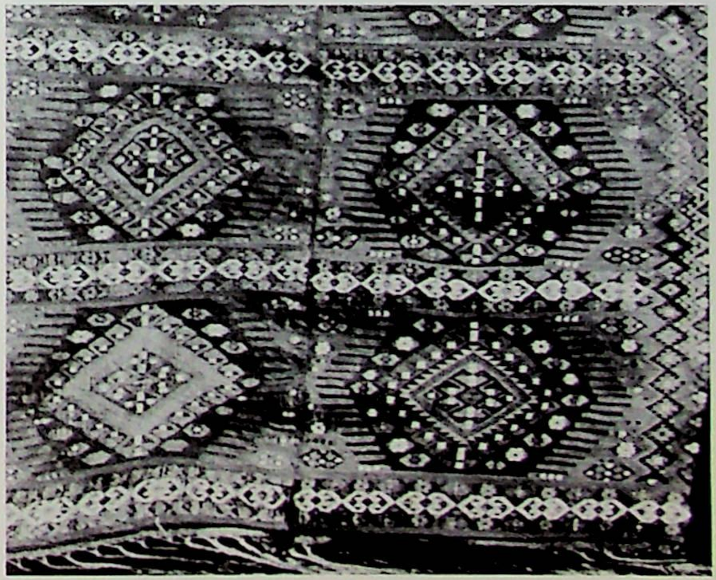


Fig. 9. So-called *Cizre* kilim. Photograph by Dr. May H. Beattie.

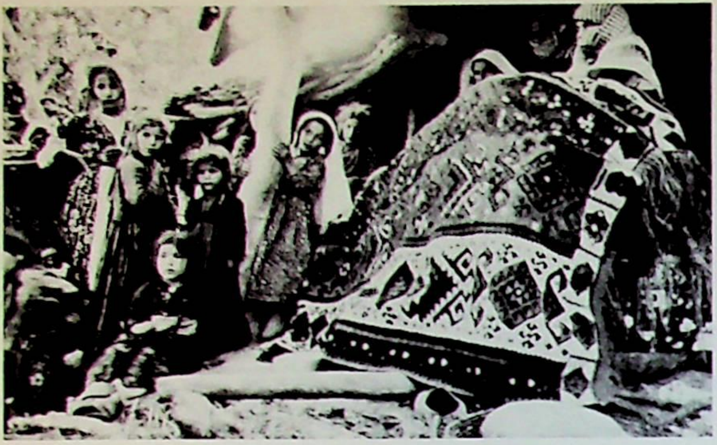


Fig. 10. Children holding up kilim at Galavır.

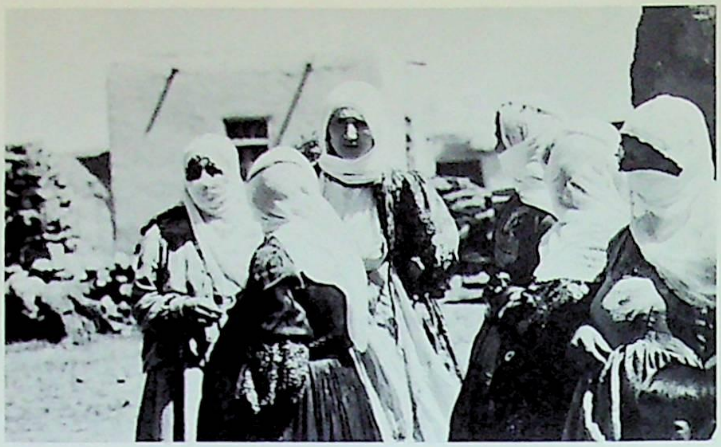


Fig. 12. Weavers at Çaldıran.

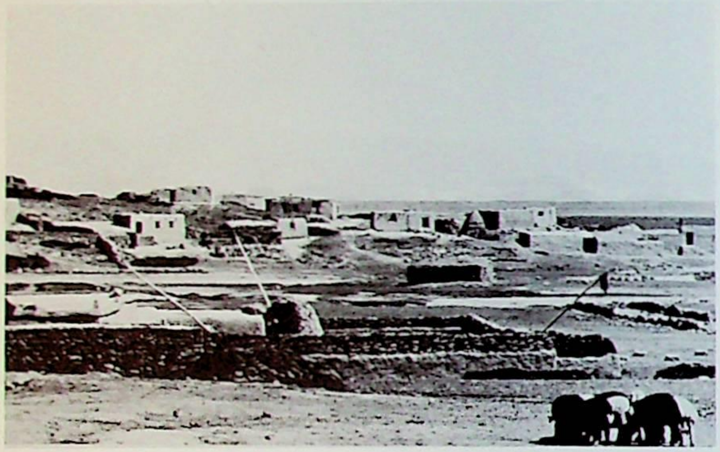


Fig. 11. View of Çaldıran.

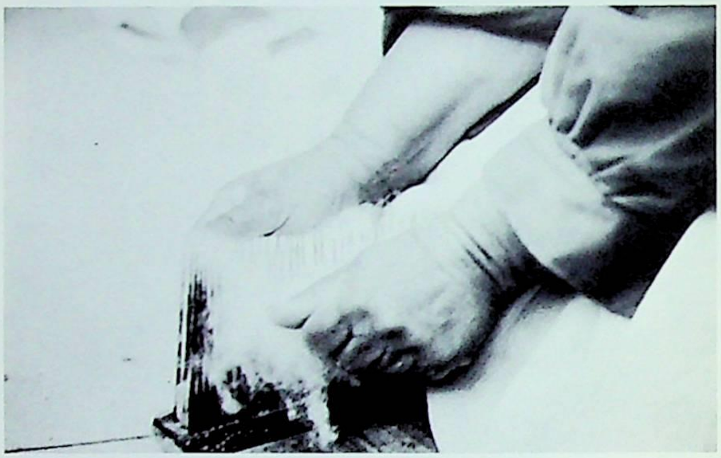


Fig. 13. Wool carding at Karapınar in central Anatolia.

whose capital was Mosul.[3] In Baghdad these kilims are referred to as Cizre. Beytüşşebap, the outpost reached on our trip, is only about 75 miles from Cizre on the Tigris, at the Iraqi border, and only 20 miles from the border "as the crow flies." The Baghdad kilims were probably made for the most part on the Turkish side in or near the Hakkari area, and were brought to the Baghdad market. (Fig. 10)

During our stay in Van-Hakkari we were able to observe and photograph Kurdish weaving processes in three places: 1) the mud and stone village of Çaldıran on the plain Northeast of Van along the Bendimahi (the fish dam) river—Selim I defeated the Safavid king, Ismael I here; (Figs. 11-12) 2) in the city of Van, where Kurdish weavers, temporarily in the city for summer work, were persuaded to set up a loom from scratch and weave a kilim for us; 3) at the small mountain village of Galavır[4] near Beytüşşebap on the almost impassable road from Hakkari (Çölermerik). In addition, we were able to observe the finished products in use in houses in other villages, and as packings and animal trappings in caravans en route to the summer pastures. We photographed both older and more recent specimens in the village mosques, which often provided evidence of local weaving production. The traditional nature of the kilims under consideration must be inferred from their character, since few if any antique specimens were found. However, in the mosques one can see other traditional types of weaving which are no longer produced.

We were able to collect examples and record the weaving processes involved in the production of the dark ground Van-Hakkari kilims, following step-by-step the shearing of the sheep and cleaning of the fleece, to spinning, warping, weaving and finishing. We were unable to observe carding in progress, although from the similarity of the other processes we can assume that the wool is pulled through spikes attached to a board, very much as it is done in other areas of Anatolia. (Fig. 13) No dyeing was in progress. Contemporary dyes are probably all synthetic. We were told that the spun yarn is dyed by the villagers, probably heated in copper pots over a *tezik* (dung cake) fire. Most villagers here, as elsewhere, claim that natural dyes are used, but such information is not reliable and in this case is contradicted by the kilims themselves. There do not seem to be any traces of the famous Armenian *kirmiz* (red insect dye) silk dyeing tradition once said to have been practiced from Van to Azerbaijan.[3] The well-known art of Armenian embroidery also has disappeared around Lake Van.

We did not observe actual pile rug weaving around Van

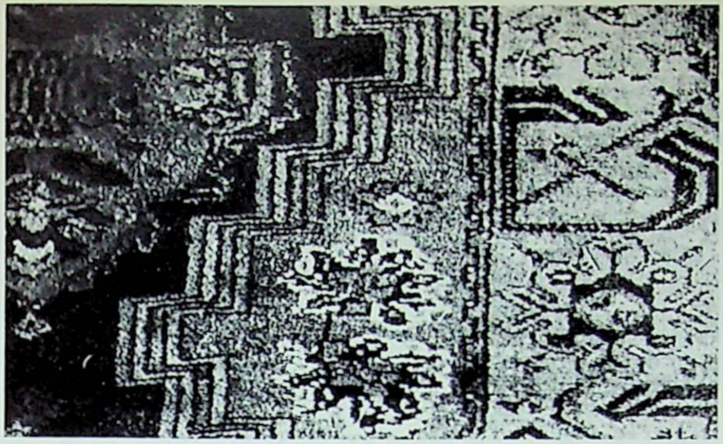


Fig. 14. Close-up of Çaldıran pile rug.

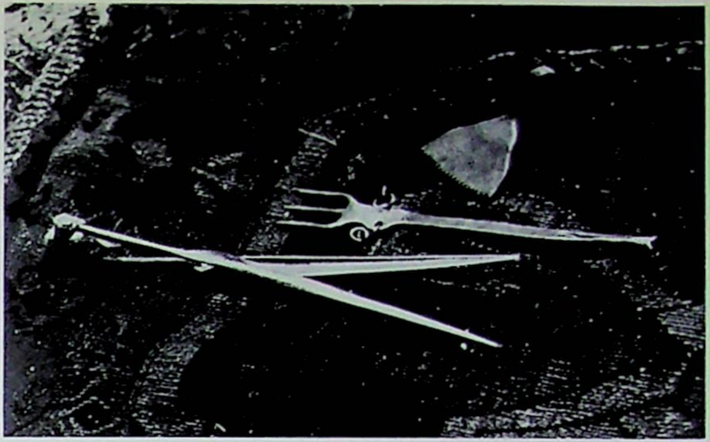


Fig. 16. Weaving tools displayed on a kilim at Çaldıran. Front, shears; center, three-tined fork for positioning weft; back, heavy iron beater.

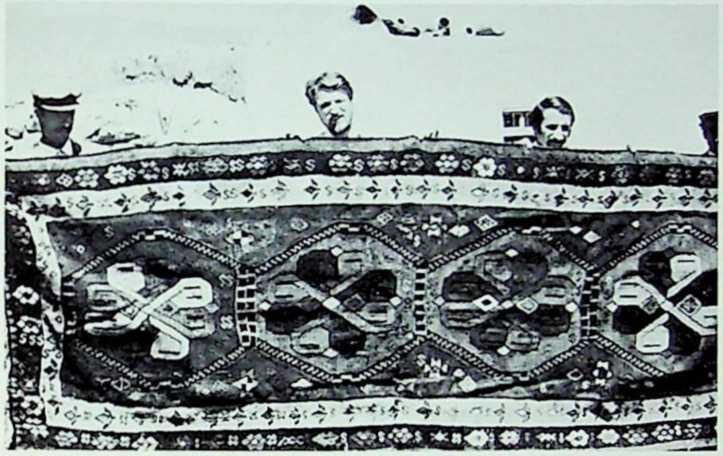


Fig. 15. Modern kilim at Çaldıran.

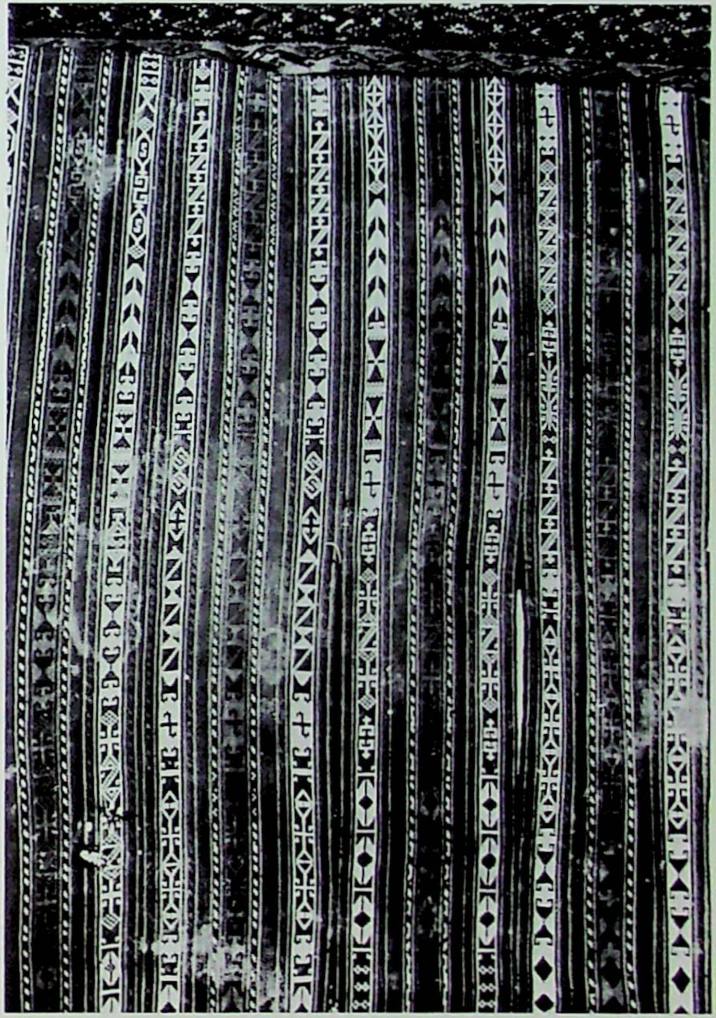


Fig. 17. Striped narrow strips of warp pattern weave are sewn together to make a portiere or cover. Informants stated that these were once made in the neighborhood, but are no longer produced. Found in the Haci Huseyin Camıı, Van. Photograph by Ralph S. Yohe.

due to the season, but at various villages and in local mosques we saw pile rugs which are definitely attributable to the neighborhood. In particular, we can identify the types prevalent in the Patnos-Erciş region North of Van and at least some of those made by Kurds South of Hakkari. At Çaldıran a pile carpet with medallions and a "Ladik" lily-like border was laid out on the ground for us along with sticks and tools, while villagers described the loom and the processes. (Fig. 14) A kilim was also laid out in the same manner. (Fig. 15) The looms and equipment are the same for the pile rug weaving as they are for the kilim weaving in the Van-Hakkari region, except that in pile weaving a three-tined fork is used to push the weft into place (Fig. 16) before beating with the standard heavy iron beater. Unlike in the Van-Hakkari region the warps of the braiding at the ends of the pile rugs and kilims at Çaldıran and in the Erciş-Patnos area, as well as those in the mosques at Bitlis and Tatvan (said to be Erciş rugs), work back into the body of the braiding. In any event, these pile rugs, many of which are produced in Turkish as well as in Kurdish communities today, are made as a commercial enterprise. The designs are given to the villagers to copy. Unlike commercially produced pile rugs woven from cartoons, kilims in Southeast Anatolia are still "out of the (weaver's) head", that is to

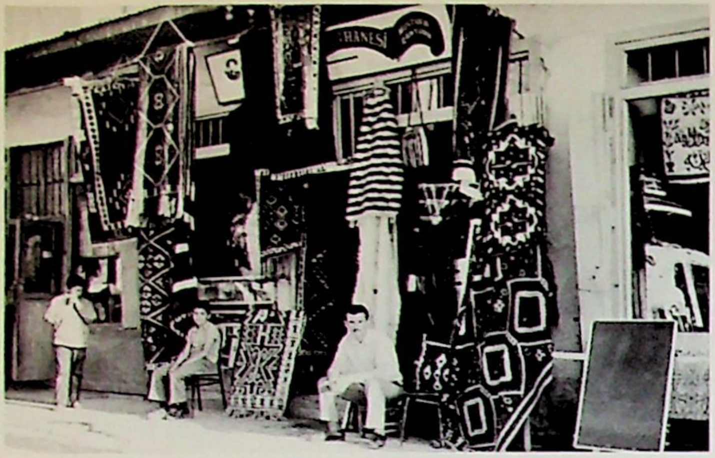


Fig. 18. A rug shop in Van. Notice the striped "Zaho" rug and a variety of kilims and pile rugs from the Van area. Photograph by Ralph S. Yohe.

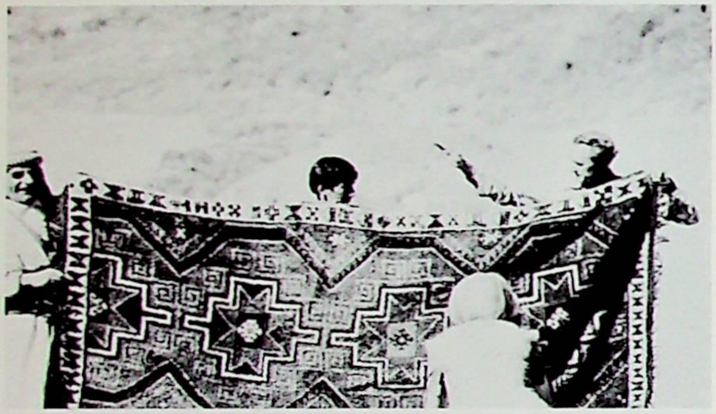


Fig. 19. Coarse pile rug near Savurhalıl Pass. The warp may be goat hair or goat hair and wool mixed.

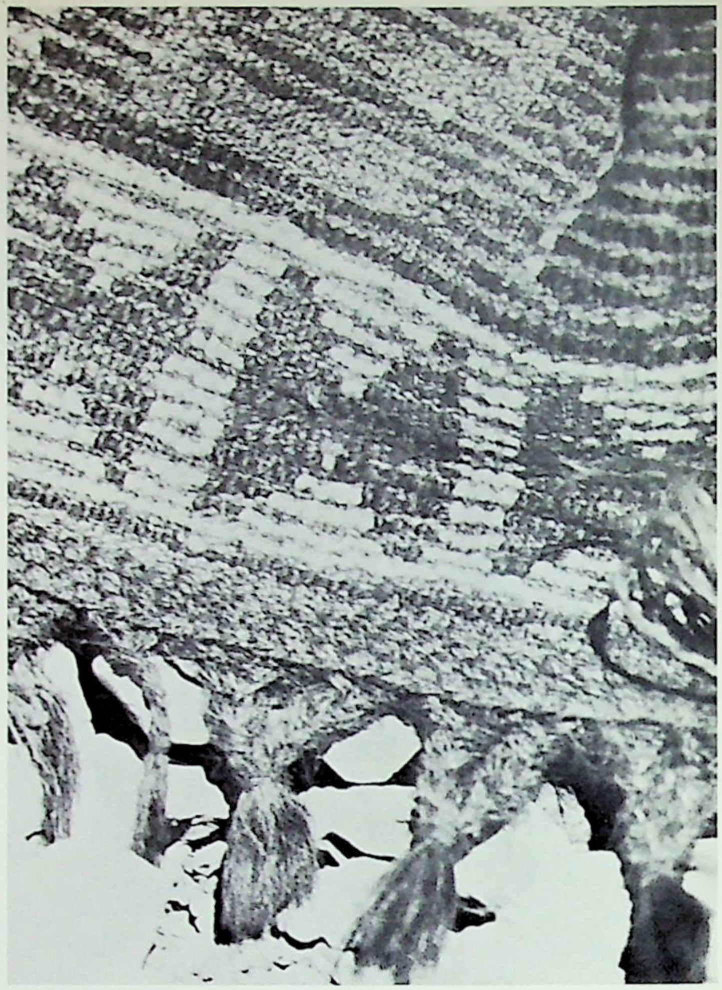


Fig. 20. Close-up of pile rug in Fig. 19. Notice warp braiding.

say, they are traditional rather than copied from an imported pattern. Many villages such as Çaldıran produce both pile rugs and kilims. The "Turkish knot" is used throughout the area.

Knitting of socks was observed at Galavır. Among older rugs and bags other flat-woven rug structures, such as warp pattern weaving, were noticed in local mosques (Fig. 17), but villagers state that "they don't make them anymore", and we found no modern examples. A dove-tailed tapestry kilim was found in the mosque at Çaldıran. It is not known if it was made there. Coarse brushed wool plain-weave rugs with alternating stripes usually in "natural" brown and white, or black and white, and known as Zaho (Zakho) rugs in Iraq, are found in the shops here (Fig 18) as well as in other Kurdish areas, for example, Siirt. A brown felt mat with dark brown designs was seen at Çaldıran. Although no further evidence was obtained, the residents say such pieces are made there.

Fortunately for the student of village rug weaving flat-woven rugs have not had until recent years the commercial popularity of pile rugs, and have been made primarily for use in the villages. Thus the kilim has retained its folk art character while most pile rug weaving has become imitative. This is true today of kilims of the Van area although they are now items of commerce. The export market is growing and no doubt tradition is dying, but kilims are still much used in villages and camps. In a Kurdish home one finds kilims in use as floor coverings, divan coverings, pillows, wall hangings, and for bags of all sizes. As mentioned before, these are used to carry possessions by shepherd groups and are seen used as animal trappings. Some of the finest kilims may not be for everyday use.

The material for weaving kilims and rugs in the Kurdish areas is sheeps' wool for both warp and weft. One pile rug which may have had goat's hair or mixed wool and goat's hair in the warp was observed at Savurhalıl Pass. (Figs. 19-20) Observations conflict on whether the warps were goat hair or not in the plain-weave bags at Galavır. Thin metal-wrapped threads were found in some of Van-Hakkari kilims, and were common in the older pieces; however, in Van weavers were observed actually weaving with metal wrapped wefts. The metal is flat and wrapped S around a cotton 2Z core (replied or loose ply) and may be *"Lurex"* in the later pieces. The source of this ever popular glitter for the nomads may have been Gaziantep. It is readily available from Istanbul.

Around Van-Hakkari are mixed and spotted flocks of brown (some rust), black and white fat-tailed sheep. Ralph

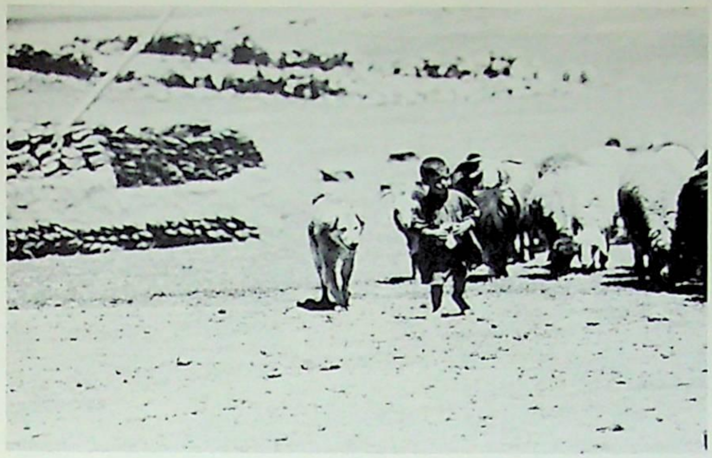


Fig. 21. Bringing in the sheep at Çaldıran.

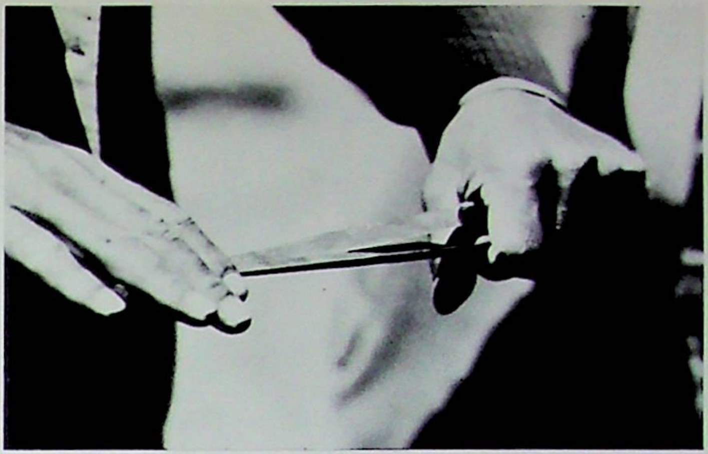


Fig. 23. Hand-made shears at Çaldıran. Similar ones are used to trim pile rugs.

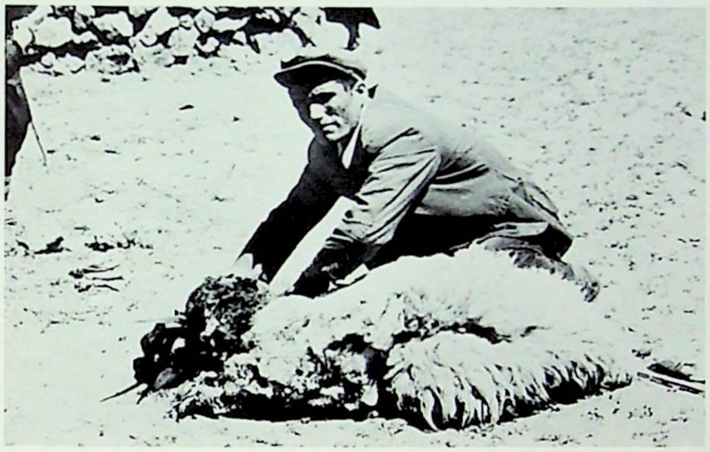


Fig. 22. Shearing a sheep at Çaldıran.

Yohe, an authority on the subject, observed changes in sheep flocks throughout Turkey. He noticed the shift from white sheep on the central plateau to the mixed flocks in Kurdistan. Apparently the Kurds in this territory are rather casual about sheep breeding. They attempt to cull the black sheep, and some even state a preference for white, but there does not seem to be a sufficiently persistent effort at selection (Figs. 21-22) to achieve all white flocks.

The preliminary steps in preparing the wool for weaving apply to pile rugs and other products as well. Shearing is done in the hot weather. The hand-made shears have holes in both blades for insertion of a wooden peg which is used as a hinge. (Fig. 23) The long wool from the sheep (yapak) is sheared in late spring-early summer, while the short wool of the lambs (yün) is sheared in late summer-early fall. Sheep raised in the mountains around Hakkari where summer feeding is good, seem to provide long staple wool, while on the Çaldıran plain the wool is shorter. The sheep are not washed but the fleece, when removed, is taken to the river for a careful cleaning by hand to eliminate grease and dirt. The wool tags are cleaned by beating in the river with a stout stick (Fig. 24) and are used principally for felt and knitting.

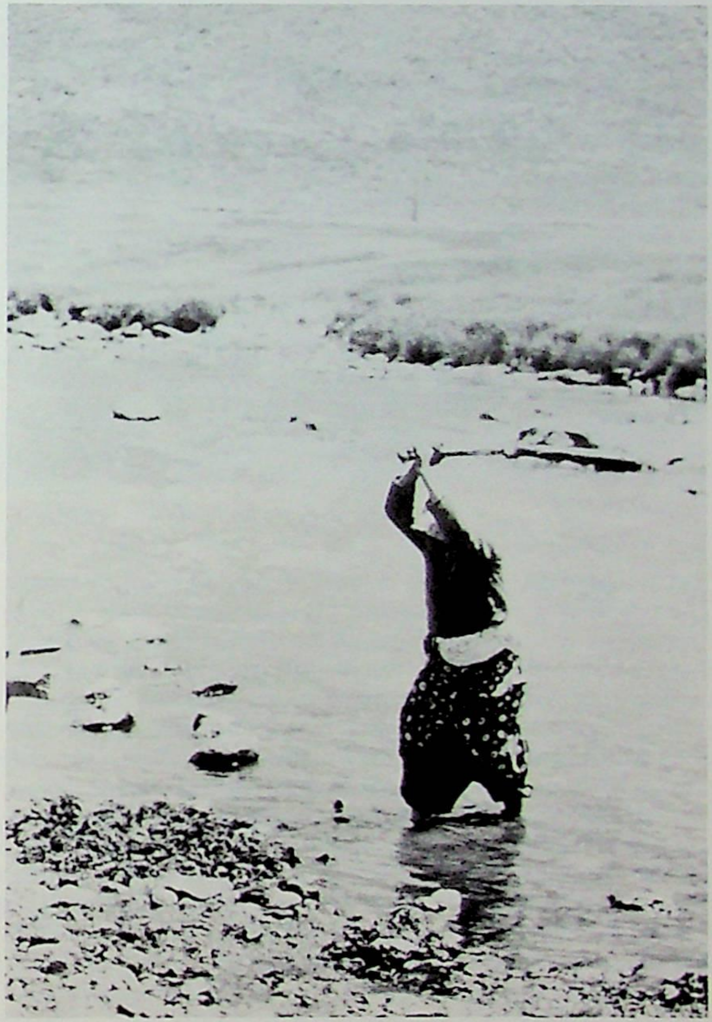


Fig. 24. Wool tags being cleaned by beating with stick in the river near Çaldıran.

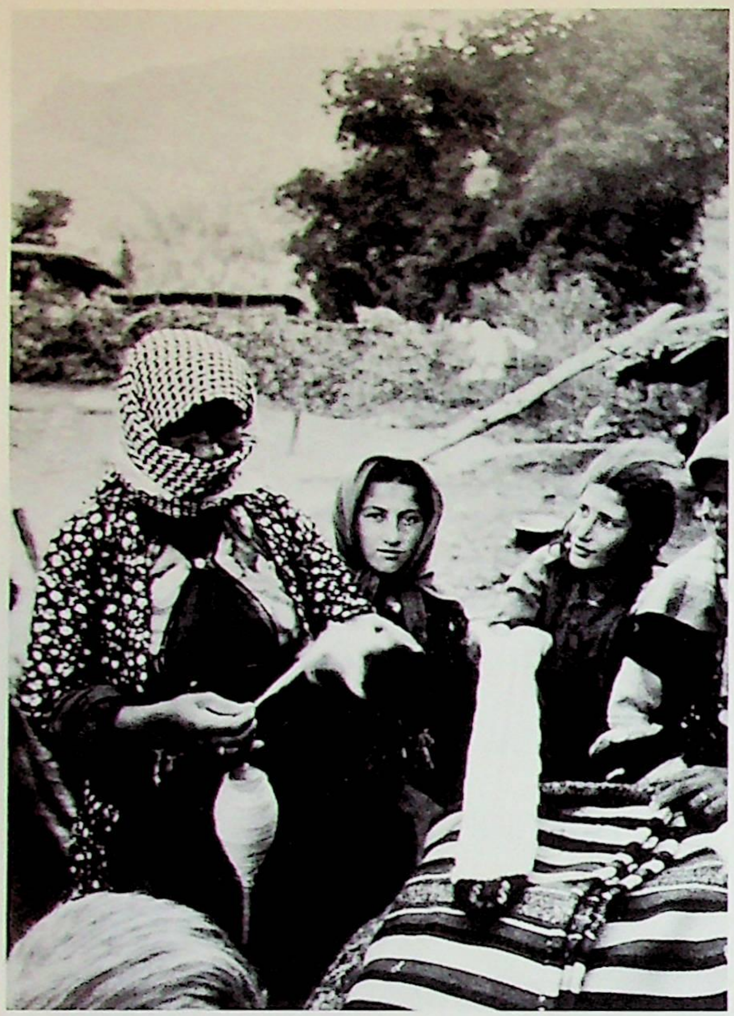


Fig. 25. Woman with roving and drop spindle at Galavır. Knitted sock is also displayed.

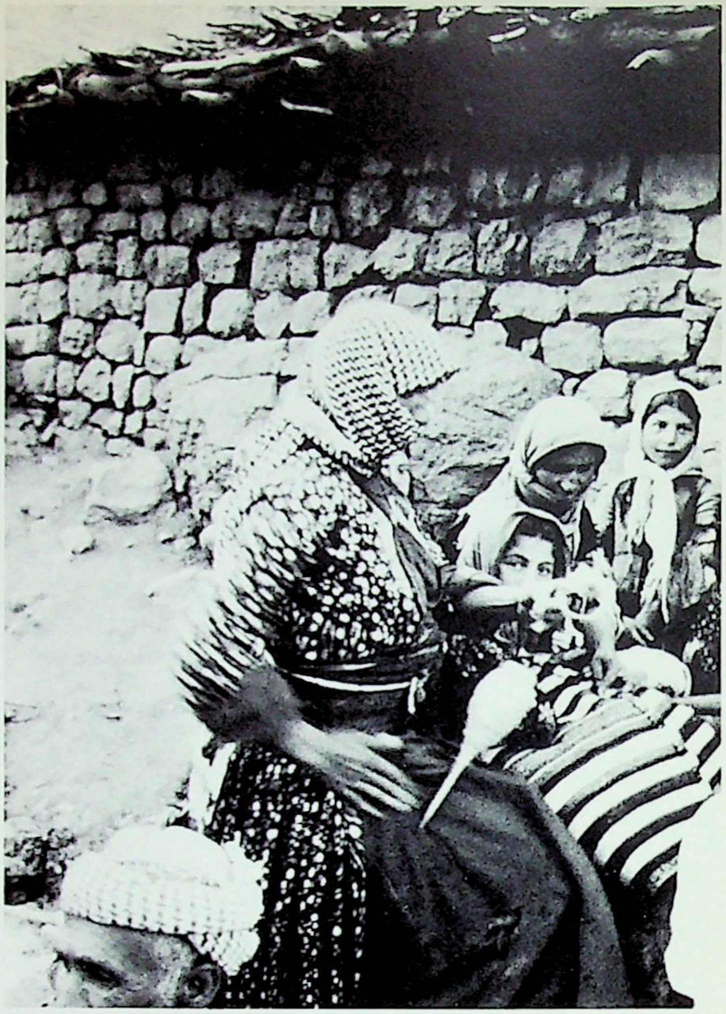


Fig. 26. Spinner rolls the spindle rapidly against her thigh in an upward direction to start a Z spin. Galavır.

A wooden drop spindle is used for spinning and plying. The whorl is a simple conical piece of wood with a hole through it for the insertion of the rod. Usually a small metal hook is supplied under the whorl at the point of the cone to attach the yarn at the start of the spinning. As in most of Anatolia, the yarn is Z-spun for kilim weaving with a hard twist for the thicker warp yarns. Both warp and weft yarns consist of two Z-spun strands plied S. The carded roving is attached to the spindle and held in the left hand, controlled by the fingers. The spindle is put against the right thigh and rolled quickly upwards against the thigh or across the body to start the rotation of the spindle and produce the Z-spin. (Figs. 25-26) It is rolled downwards to ply in the S direction.

Kilim weaving is done on a loom stretched horizontally along the ground. Stones are often set under the frame to raise it slightly. At Van, both in the loom illustrated and in houses where we could observe but not photograph, the loom frame consisted of two cross beams perhaps two inches in diameter at either end of the warp. These were inserted into slots cut into large crude side pieces of wood. Tension is produced by a tight warping. Wedges were not observed but may be used. If a warp is broken during weaving, another piece is simply knotted in. In Galavır the looms that were used had no frame. The two end beams supporting the circular warp were kept in tension and held in place by stakes at both ends driven into the ground. This variety is more typical of nomadic weaving and I suspect that the side elements completing the frame are a city

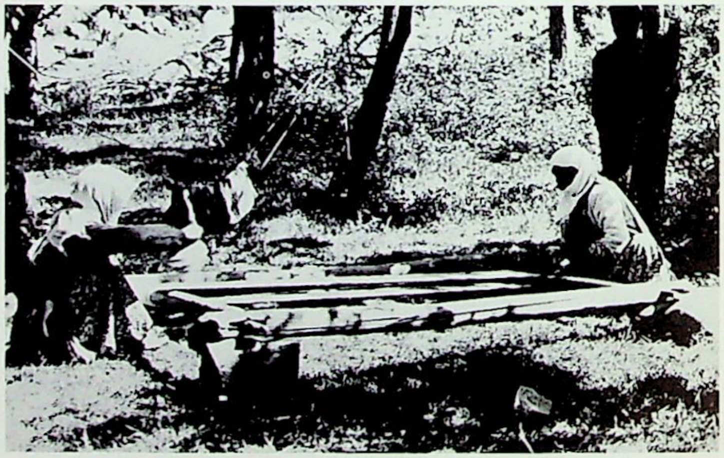


Fig. 27. Loom frame at Van. Two women warping.

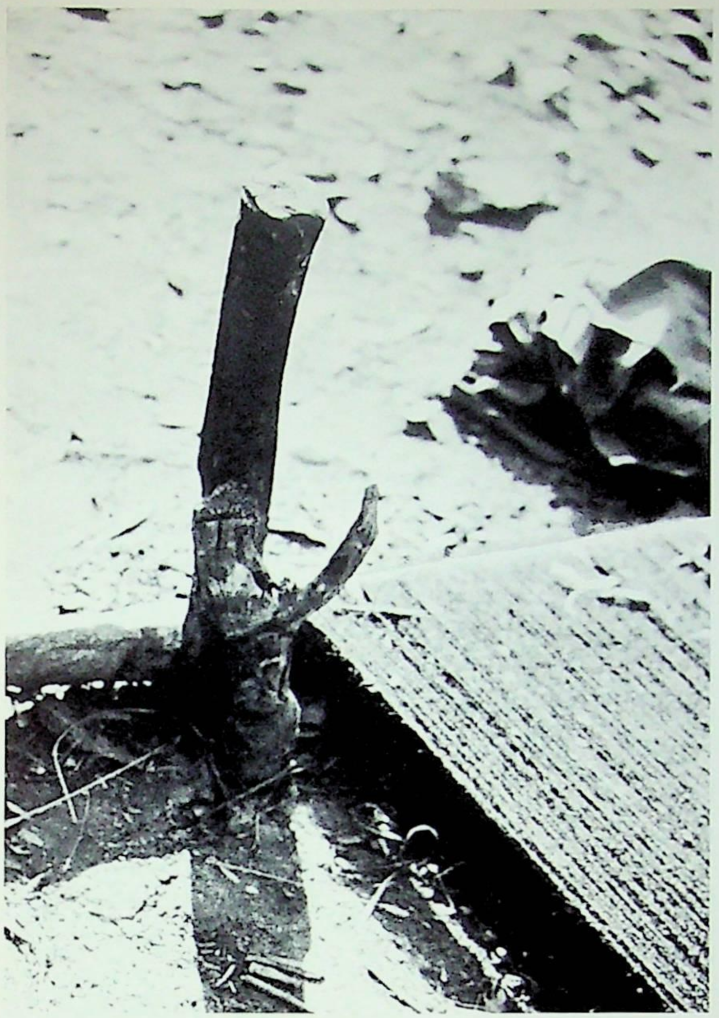


Fig. 28. Tension stakes at beam on loom at Galavır.

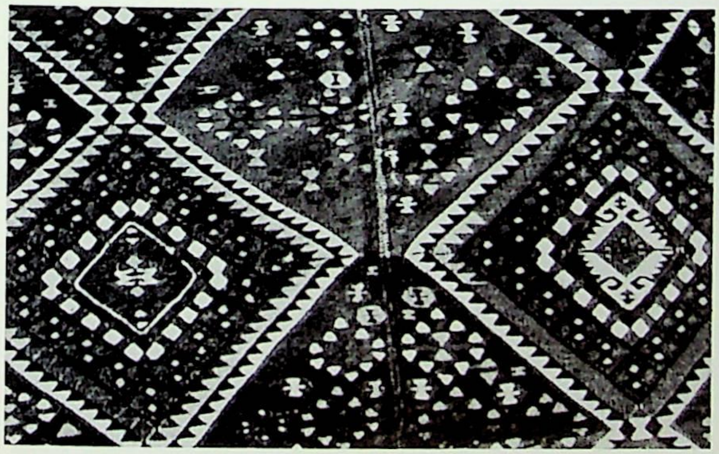


Fig. 29. Kilim, two woven pieces sewn together.

version evolving as people settle in towns. Such a frame would be impractical for a nomad who must be able to roll up his loom for travel when not in use. (Figs. 27-28)

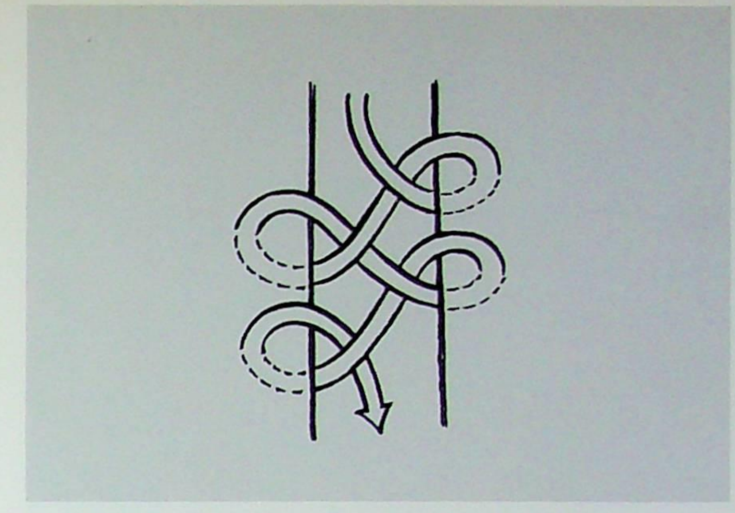


Fig. 30. Diagram of sewing stitch joining two sides of kilim.

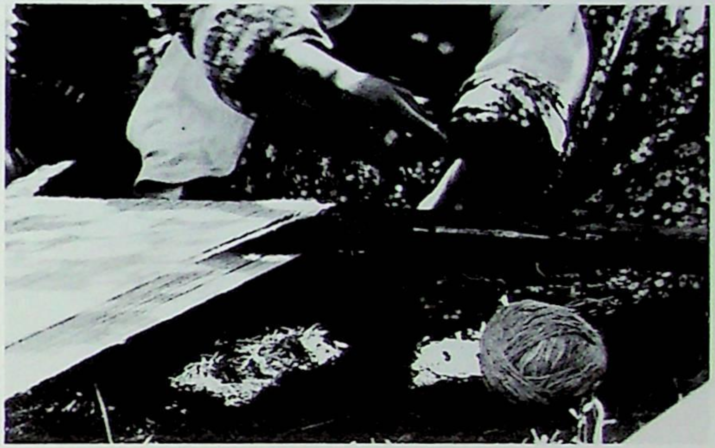


Fig. 31. Van. Warping-ball of yarn.

The heavy pile warp yarn, usually dark or mixed brown, or two shades of brown "barberpoled", is rolled into a large ball. Some of the more recent kilims have colored warps. The ball of yarn is first attached by a knot to one of the warp beams, then the continuous circular warp is wound by two women, one at either end of the loom, who throw the ball back and forth to each other. The finished cloth may be pulled to the underside of the loom enabling the weavers to complete a piece nearly double the length of the loom, or the weaver may turn the loom over to use the other half of the warp. In the Van-Hakkari area kilims are woven in widths of about 27 to 34 inches. Two woven widths are sewn together for the completed kilim. A lacing stitch joins the two woven halves of the kilim. (Fig. 29-30) The beams extend about one foot on either side of the warp. These local kilims are about 83 to 86 inches in length which would correspond approximately to the length of the loom plus allowance for a long braided fringe at either end. In the Hakkari area none of the woven panels joined together as kilims have widths exactly equal, and no one piece is uniform throughout. There is no twining or other spacing device used at the beams to keep the warp in place. Instead, the weaver carefully lays each warp next to its neighbor as it turns about the beam, seeing to it that the warps do

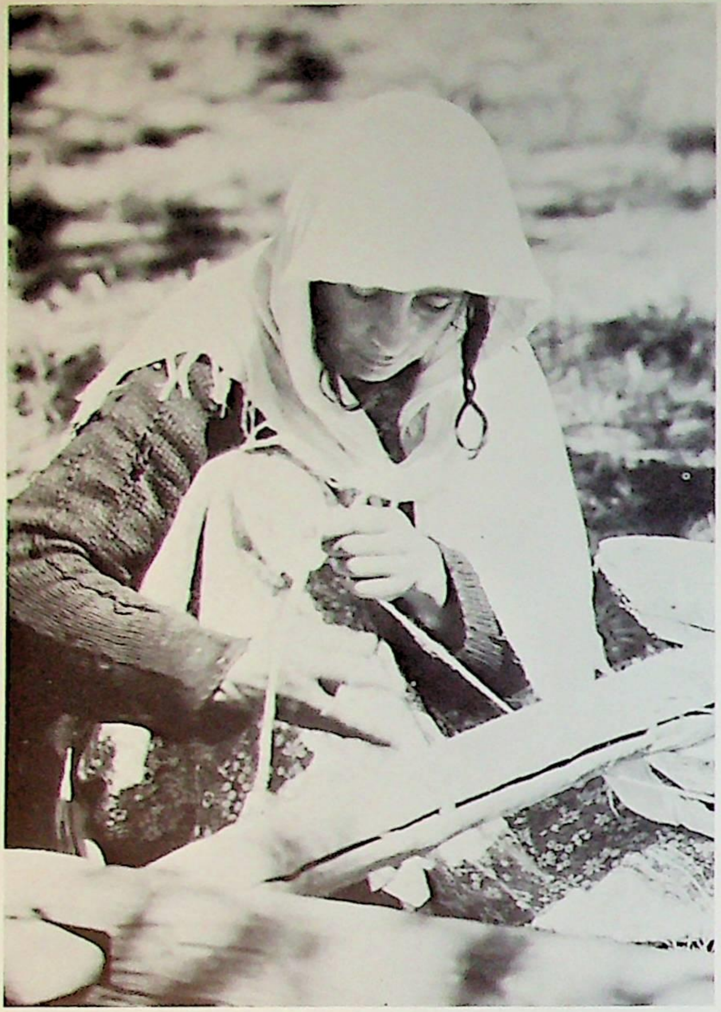


Fig. 32. Van. Placing warps side by side as they circle the beams.

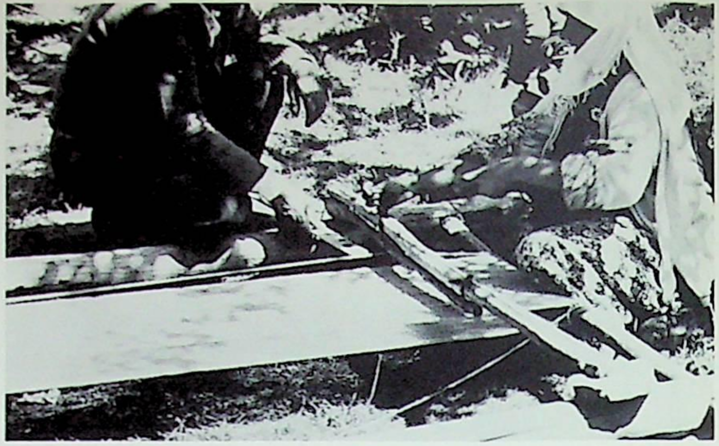


Fig. 33 Van. Heddle stick and gauge are held in place while assistant lifts warps to estimate proper height of shed.

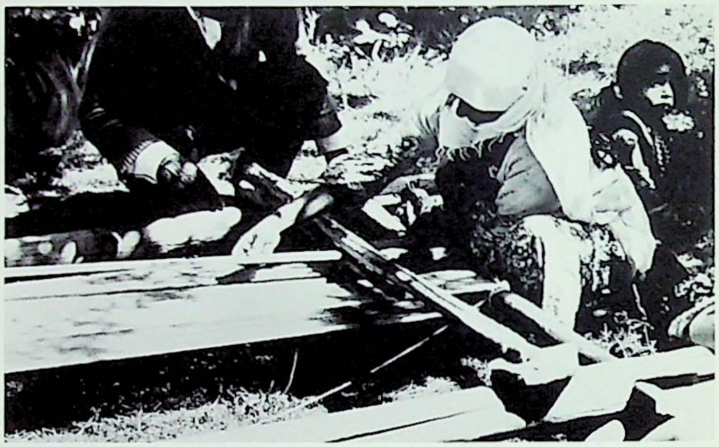


Fig. 34. Van. Adjusting heddle gauge.

not cross or overlap. Tension is maintained by one woman holding the yarn in place while the woman at the other beam makes the next turn. If the warping has to stop for any reason, the tension is maintained by tying it to a beam with a slip knot. (Figs. 31-32) The four warps at either side are doubled making two cords on each selvedge. Despite the absence of twining or knotting at the warp beams, the weavers of this area evince a great deal of manual dexterity and the kilims are attractive and tightly woven, but few of them lie flat. Of course, like in all village weaving in Islamic countries, there is a great deal of improvisation by the weavers and lack of concern for mistakes.

A round heddle stick is selected and a woolen cord ("leash string") is stretched along it, wrapped and tied at both ends. This stick is set upon some rocks resting on the side beams close to the end of the loom where the weavers work. A gauge stick to measure the proper length of the heddles is held directly under the heddle stick while one of the workers holds up a few warps with another stick to estimate the proper height of the shed, or opening between warps for passage of the weft. The heddle gauge stick is temporarily tied under the heddle stick to measure the proper length of the heddles, while a flat stick or finger keeps them spaced properly. Finally, flat stones are wedged between them for even spacing throughout. (Figs. 33-34-35)

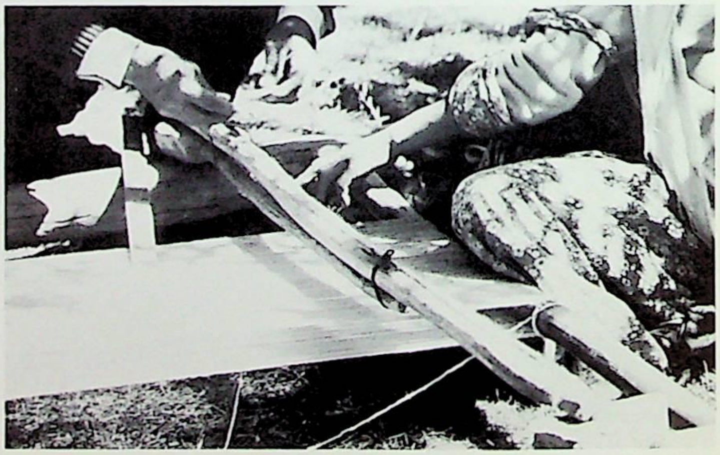


Fig. 35. Van. While weaver maintains proper spacing with finger, gauge is tied to heddle stick.

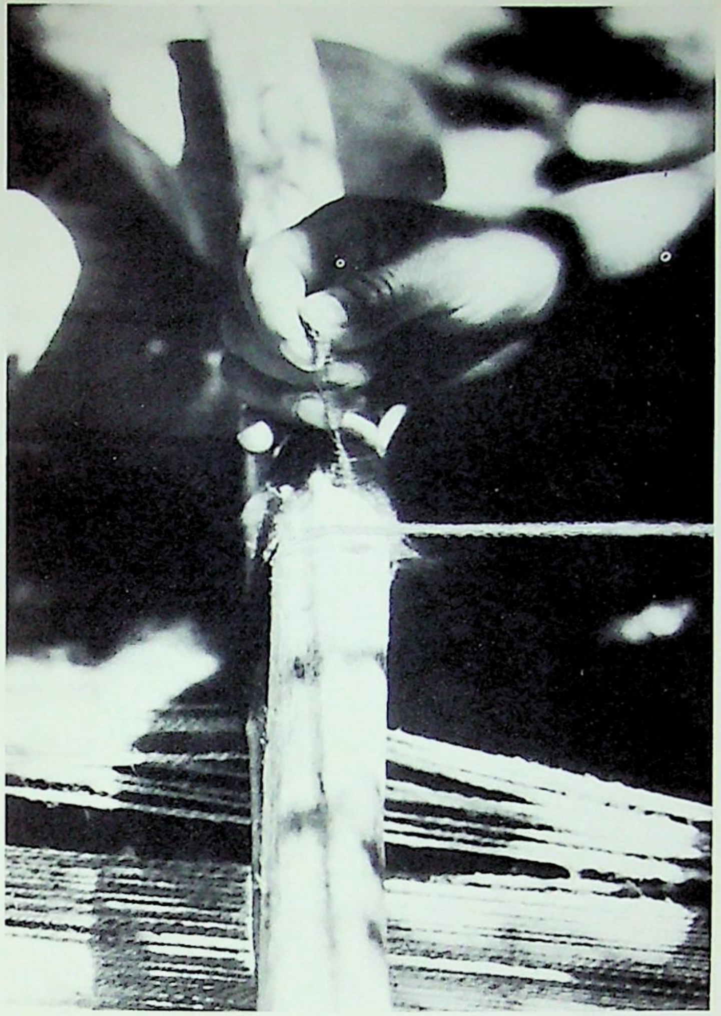


Fig. 36. Van. Progressive wrapping of heddles in figure-8 loop, side view.

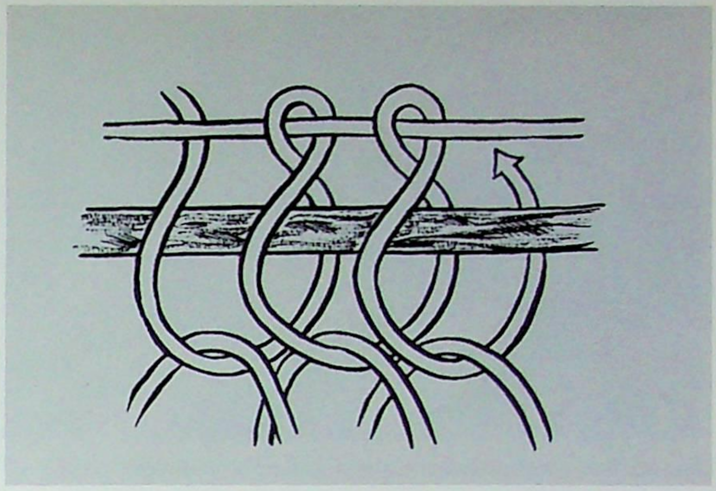


Fig. 38. Diagram of wrapping sequence for heddles.

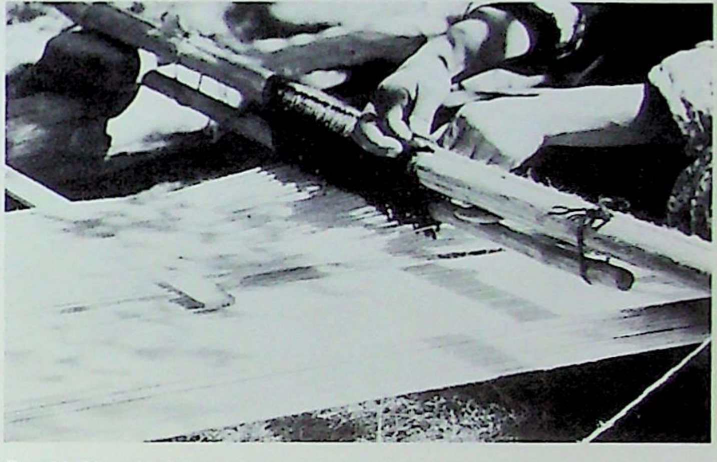


Fig. 39. Van. Heddles and leash stick.

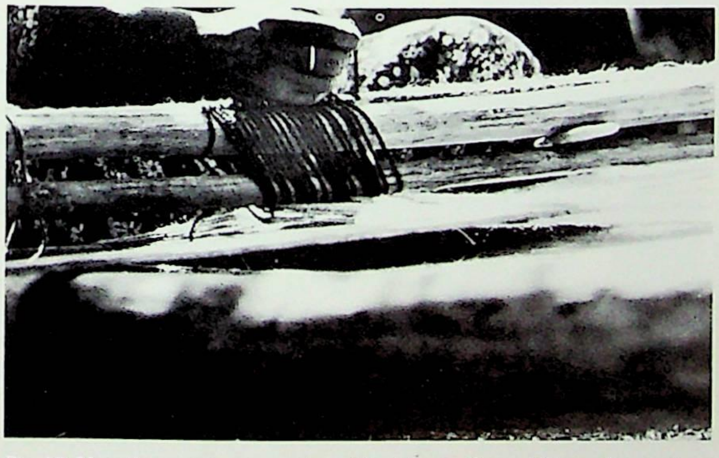


Fig. 37. Van. Progressive wrapping of heddles in figure-8 loop, front view.

Proceeding from the right a ball of plied yarn, usually dark brown, is progressively wrapped around the heddle stick and leash cord in figure-8 loops going under the gauge stick where it catches a warp each time. (Figs. 36-37-38) Every other warp is thus held by this heddle yarn. Alternate warps not thus engaged are lifted by a flat shedstick inserted behind the heddle stick (away from the weaver). This is worked in and out progressively across the warps along with the heddles, and is used in the weaving to raise that half of the warps not raised by the heddles thus creating two alternating sheds for the weaving. When the heddles are completed, the remainder of the ball of yarn is tucked under the leash string, rather than being cut off or tied. This was observed in several villages. The yarn is undoubtedly used again. The gauge stick is removed before weaving and the heddles are pushed back to allow more weaving space. The heddle stick, resting on stones, is lashed to the side beams with cord. (Figs. 39-40-41)

The weavers have sacks of colored yarn close by and proceed to wind bobbins for the weft. Yarn used for the plainweave to start the weaving is wound on short sticks (about 8-12 inches). "Butterfly" bobbins, small balls of yarn that will unravel as used, are wound for the tapestry wefts.[5] (Fig. 42)

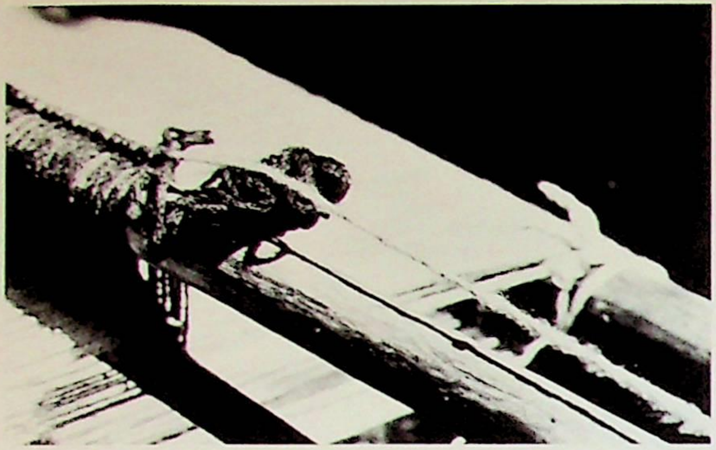


Fig. 40. Van. Heddles completed, yarn is tucked under leash string.

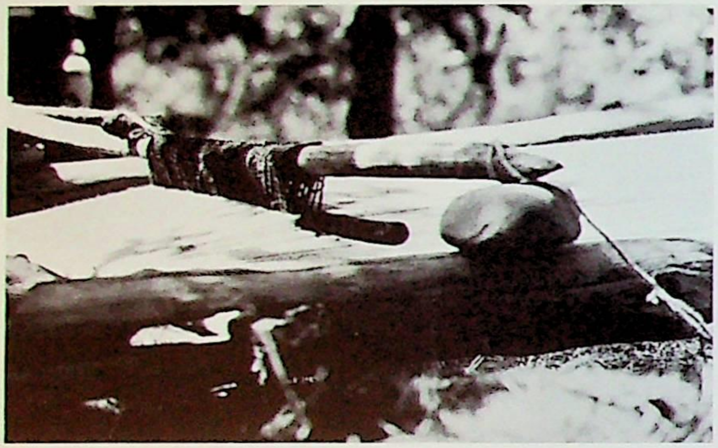


Fig. 41. Van. Heddle stick is tied to frame.

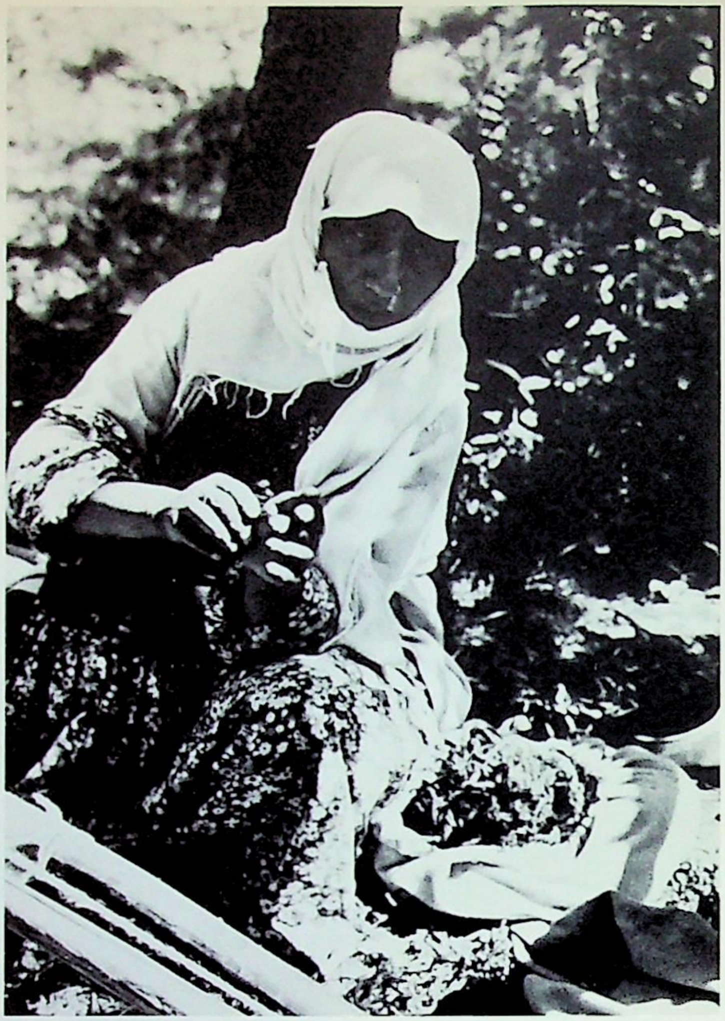


Fig. 42. Van. Bobbin winding.

A withe is inserted to start the weaving. It is pushed right up to the beam closest to the weaver. Then several rows of weft are passed through the sheds in plain weave. The heddle bar keeps the first shed raised when the heddle stick behind is pushed back. When the shed stick is brought forward up against the heddles the second, less pronounced, shed is opened above the level of the warps controlled by the string heddles. A flat stick or "sword" is inserted and turned on edge to widen the opening and keep it in place as the weaver's hands are freed for inserting the weft. At Van one weaver was using a new squared-off stick. This particular weaver may simply have been using a substitute because in her haste the usual tool was not available. In most places a smooth beveled stick is the normal weaving "sword". Similarly, when one weaver needed a heddle stick, she simply looked around for a stick the right length. (Figs. 43-44) Often the tension is not correct at the beginning and the first few rows of plain-weave may be wasted in adjusting it. A few twigs are sometimes used in selected spots to tighten warps, and often an extra turn or two of the weft will be inserted near either selvedge to level the weaving. (Fig. 45) Finally, after a few rows of even plain-weave have been completed, the kilim or tapestry-woven rug proper is ready to be woven.

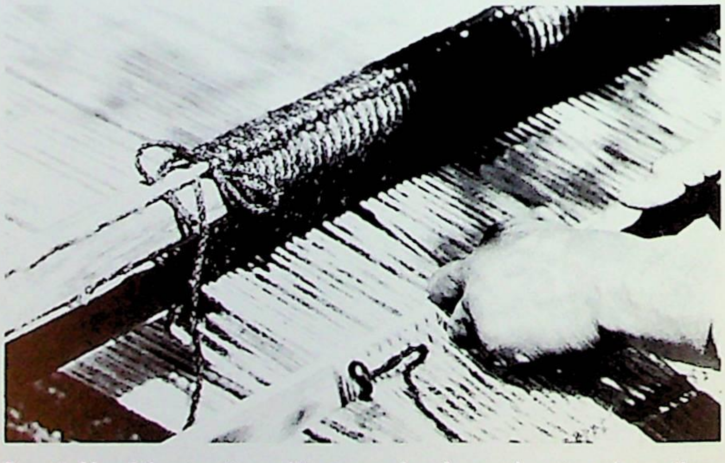


Fig. 43. Van. Weaving "sword" is inserted and turned on its side to allow passage of the weft. Normally the "sword" is beveled.

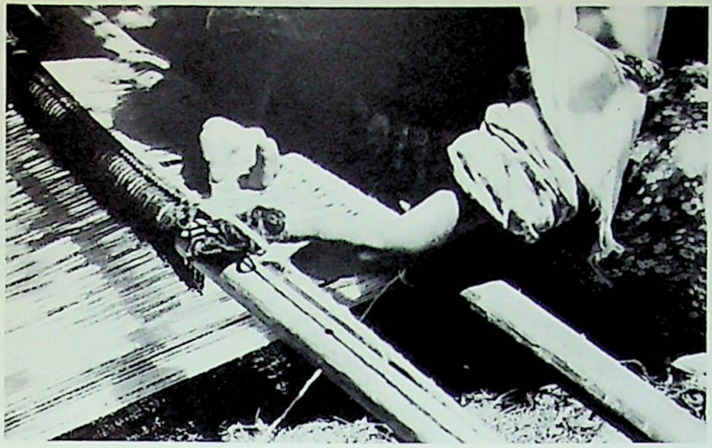


Fig. 44. Van. Inserting plain-weave.

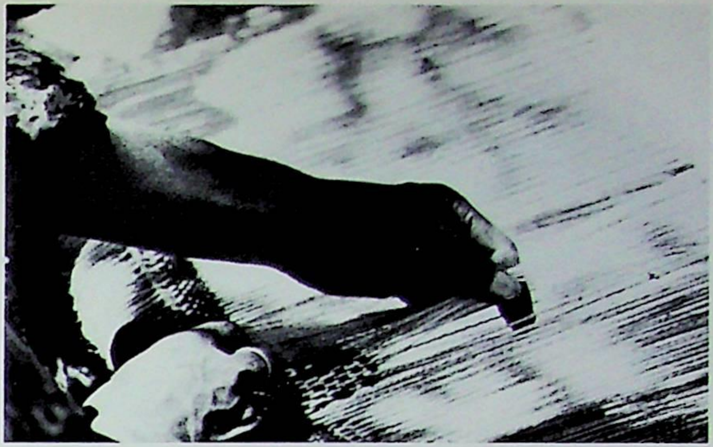


Fig. 47. Van. Fingers opening shed for tapestry weft.

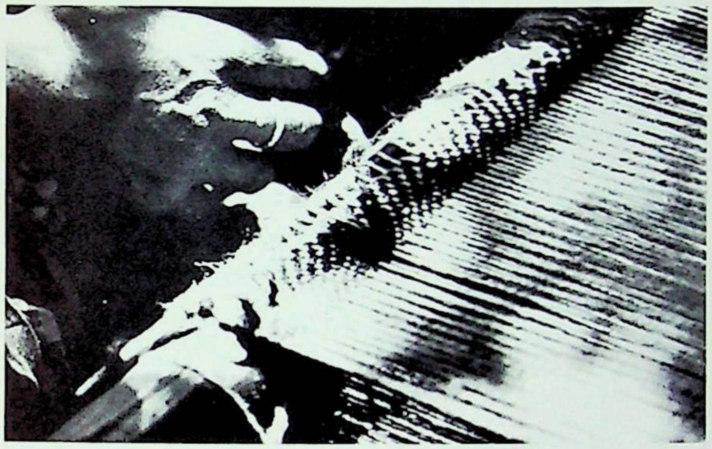


Fig. 45. Van. An extra turn in the plain-weave needed because of uneven warp tension.

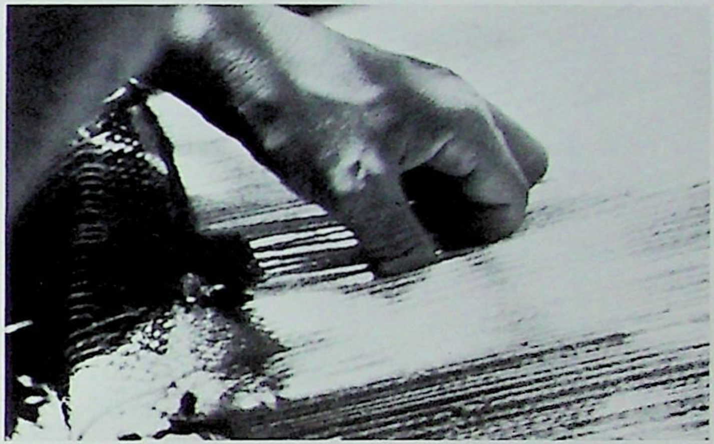


Fig. 48. Van. Weavers insert one small color area at a time.

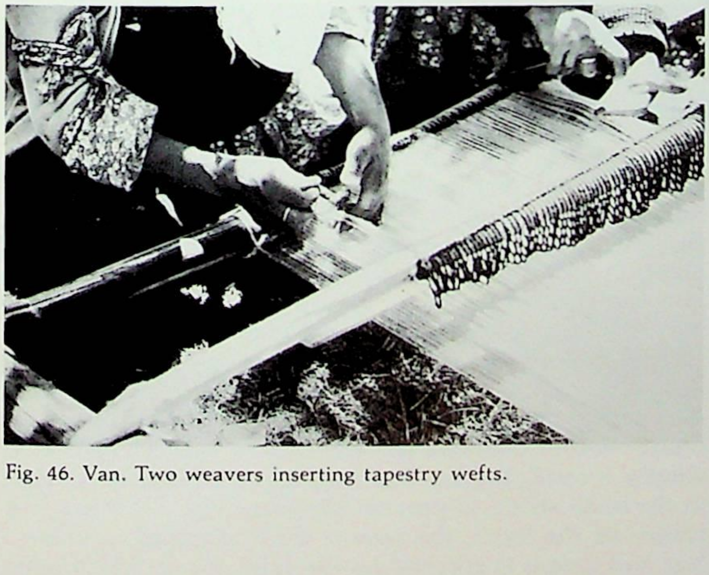


Fig. 46. Van. Two weavers inserting tapestry wefts.

The technique for Kurdish kilim weaving in the Van-Hakkari area, as in most of Anatolia, is weft-faced slit-tapestry.[5] In slit-tapestry the wefts are discontinuous turning back at the edge of each color area on adjacent warps, which leaves an open slit wherever a vertical line is formed. Rather than row by row, weavers complete one color area at a time. Outlining wefts are used often between color areas and are a form of pregressive wrapping akin to Soumak.[6] Two weavers may work at a time—as the usual loom could not accommodate more. The approximate time taken by one weaver to complete a large kilim, such as those in Figures 7 and 8, is one month, working fairly steadily. In weaving tapestry, the weavers do not use the shedding devices. They strum the warps with their fingers and when using the alternate set of warps (one shed is automatically open) in a small area, they pick them with their fingers with lightning speed. A heavy iron beater is used but the extra cord so often inserted temporarily, to absorb the blows of the beater, in other areas of Anatolia, is apparently not used. (Figs. 46-47-48-49) As the weaver completes sections of the weaving, she will put a thick beam or boards on a rock underneath the weaving as a seat so that she can push the heddles back and keep moving.

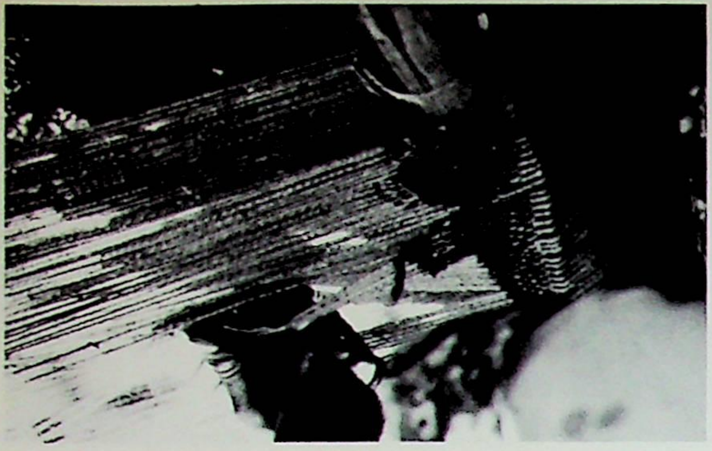


Fig. 49. Van. Beating down the tapestry wefts.

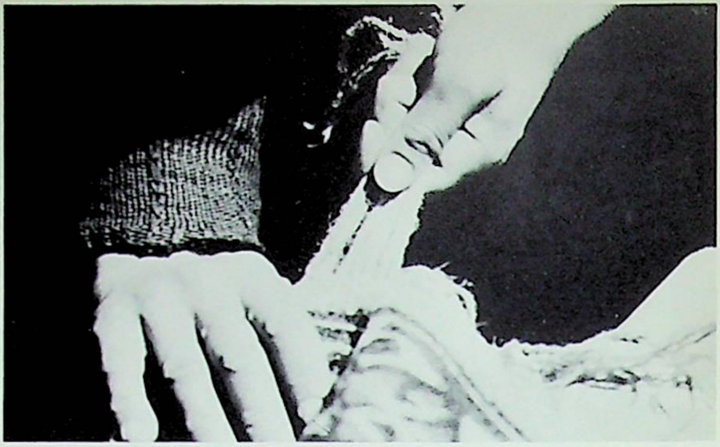


Fig. 51. Van. Braiding—pulling out warps for square braid.

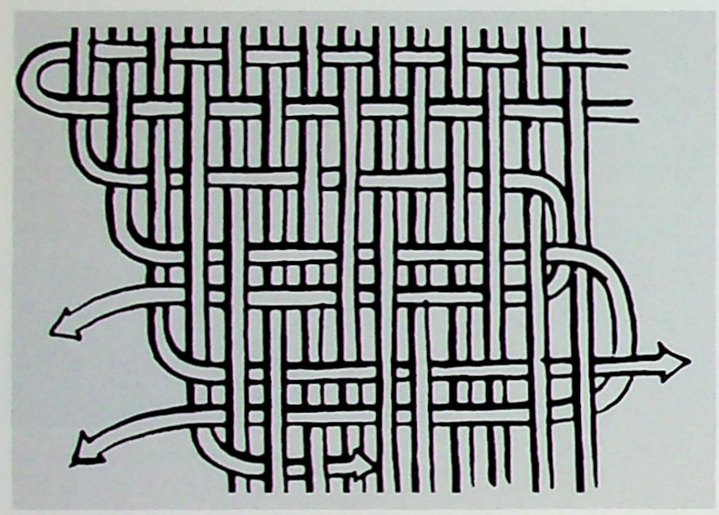


Fig. 50. Diagram of braiding sequence in Van-Hakkari kilim.

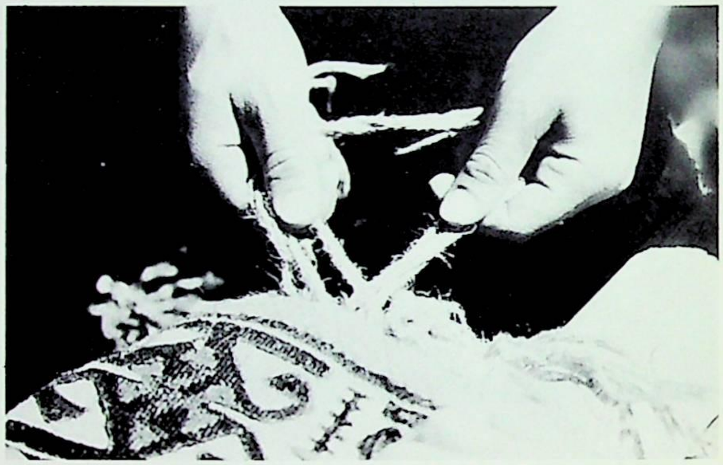


Fig. 52. Van. Braiding.

A typical Van-Hakkari kilim contains about 10 warps per inch (2.5cm.) and about 44 tapestry wefts per inch. A very fine one may contain as many as 11 warps per inch and 50 wefts per inch. Three or four rows of two-strand twining[5] have been noticed near the ends of the kilim used as decorative outlining of borders.

The warp ends in the Van-Hakkari Kurdish kilims are finished by braiding. The warps are interlaced laterally in the sequence illustrated in the diagram (Fig. 50) two warps being used for each unit. They work back out to the edge of the lateral braid and are then commonly arranged in 4 units of three warps each (12 warps) and worked into long square braids. In some kilims the warp ends are knotted or occasionally left to hang loose rather than in square braids. Similar types of braiding seem to be common throughout Turkish Kurdistan; however, there are many local variations. (Figs. 51-52-53)

In the Hakkari-Beythüşşebap area warp-faced plain-weave bags are also woven on the same type of loom that is used for kilims and pile rugs. (Fig. 54) It is estimated that a complete bag would take about three and one-half days to weave. In some bags the warps are plain (brown), and in others they are arranged in colored stripes. (Fig. 55) Weaving is the same as that described for plain-weave at Van except that the heddles are kept in operation throughout. Each passage of the weft is from selvedge to selvedge. Because the weaving is warp-faced, the warps are set very close together and being of wool (goat hair?) they are difficult to separate. To cope with this problem the weaver uses a rounded wooden peg which she vigorously strums across the warps to separate the sheds. (Fig. 56) This was also done to a lesser extent for the plain weaving in the kilims at Van. A beveled weaving "sword" is used and a heavy iron beater. At the selvedge an extra turn around the last two warp pairs is taken by each weft to make a very sturdy selvedge. We were unable to examine the heddles at leisure but with close-set warps, rather than being simply looped, the heddles may have an overhand knot at the leash string to prevent slipping. (Fig. 57) When it is taken off the loom, the woven cloth is folded to make a bag and then it is stitched up the sides. Dr. Beattie's notes indicate that they took "two stitches where we would have

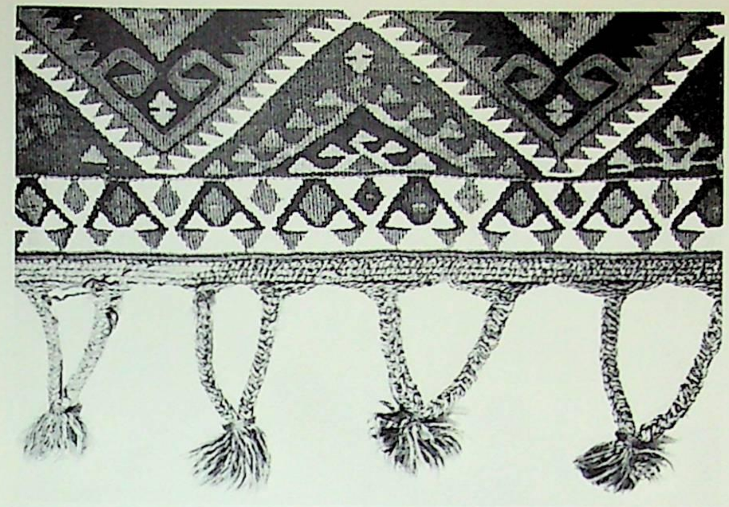


Fig. 53. Van. Completed braid.

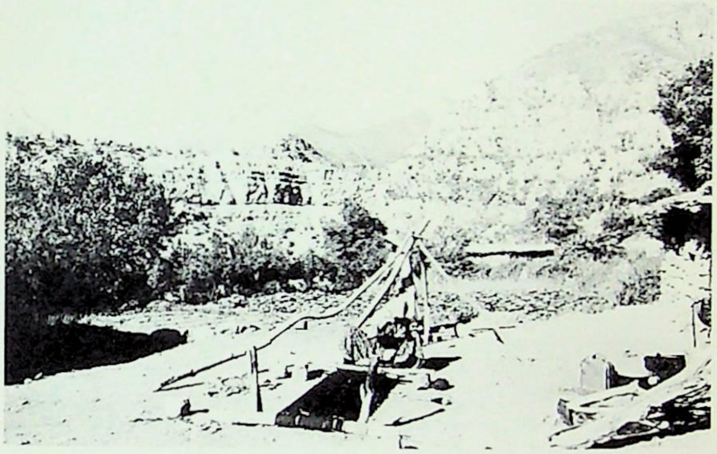


Fig. 54. Loom at Galavır.

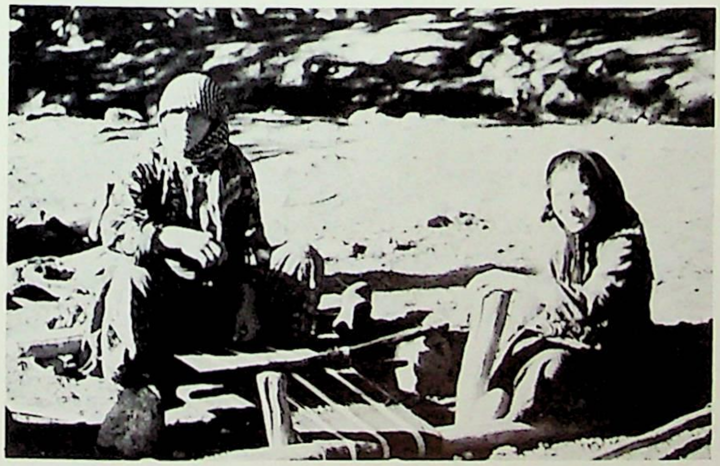


Fig. 55. Striped warp loom at Galavır for bag weaving.

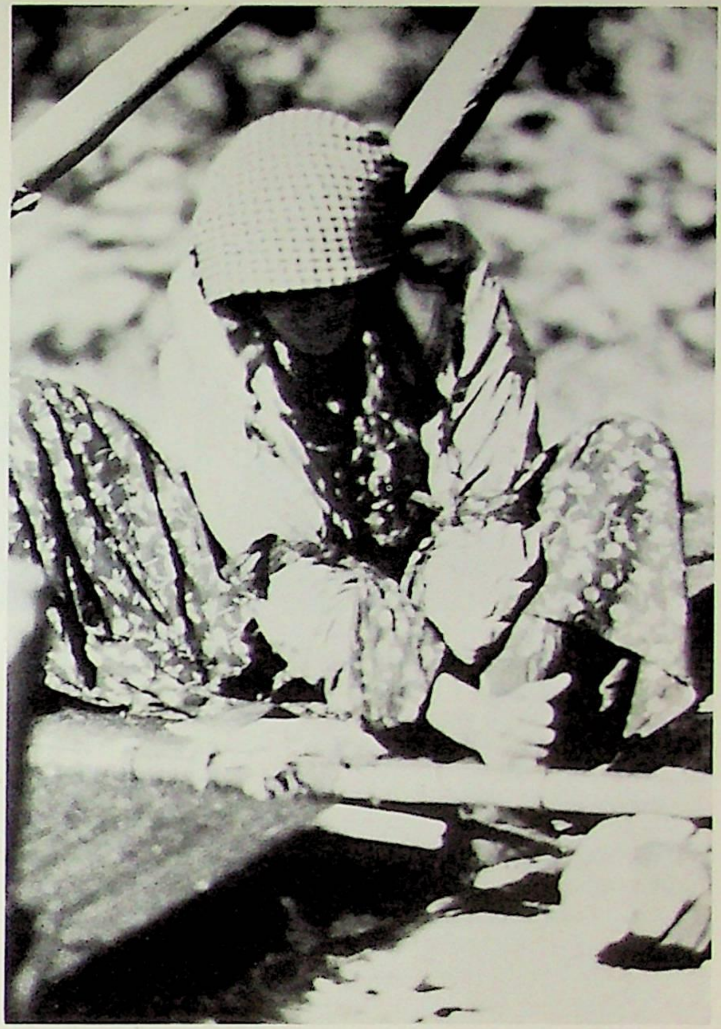


Fig. 56. Galavır. Using a peg to separate warps in warp-faced weaves.

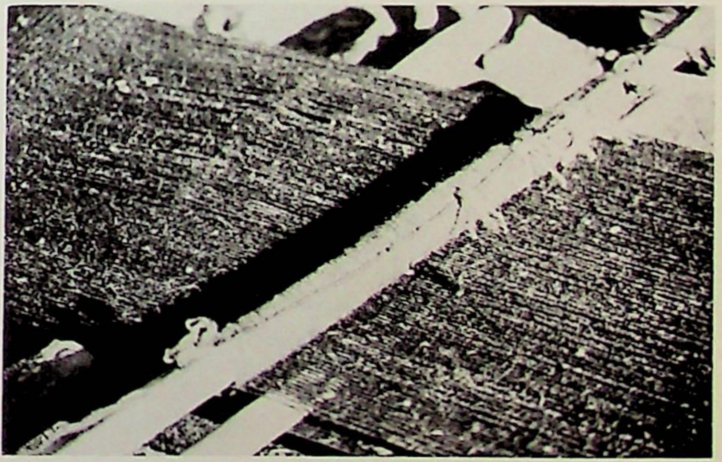


Fig. 57. Heddles on Galavır loom.

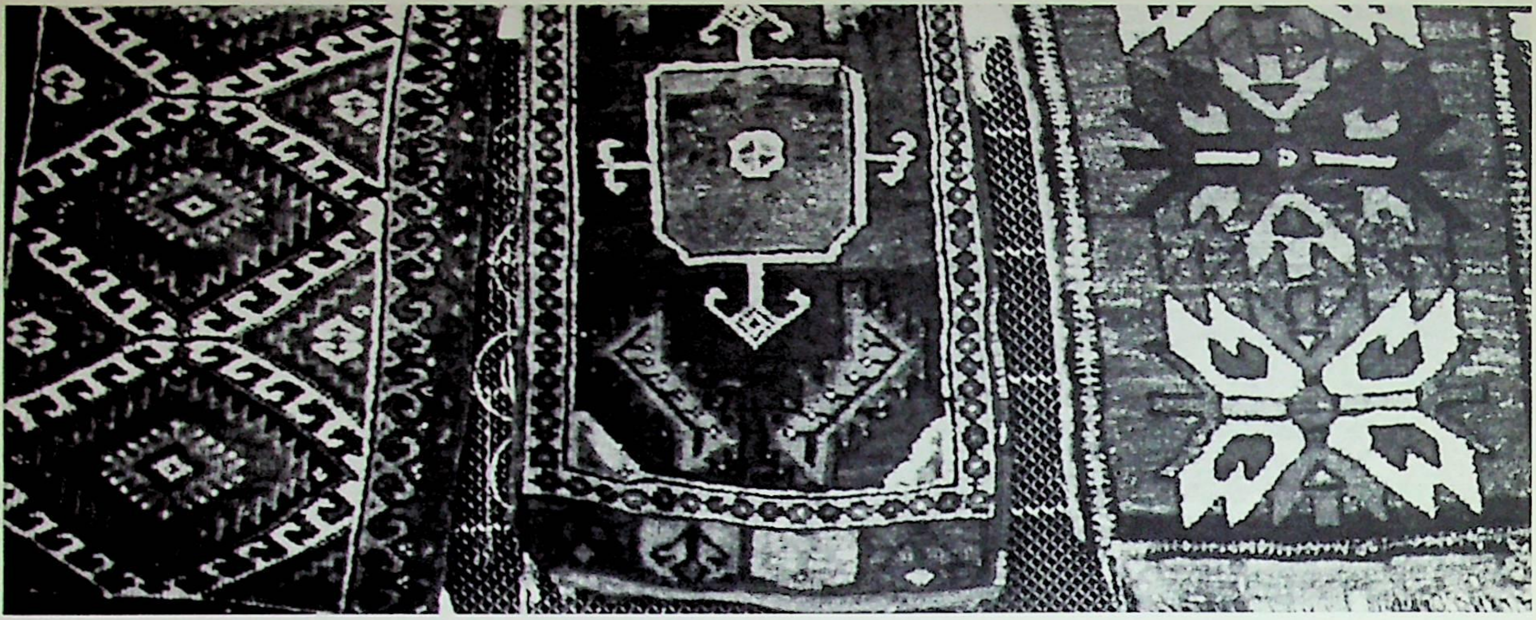


Fig. 58. Three small pile rugs probably from the Çaldıran, Erciş, area. Photograph by Ralph S. Yohe.

used one...the second stitch was a little one on the top just under the thread." The exact sequence is unclear from the photographs.

Using ancient methods, the traditional art of kilim weaving continues among the Kurds in the Van-Hakkari region. (Fig. 58) As so many types of rugs have been attributed to these people, it is useful to be able to establish exactly what has been and is still being woven in a specific area.

Notes

[1] Discussion of structures found in non-pile Islamic rug weaving may be found in A. Landreau-W. R. Pickering, *From the Bosporus to Samarkand: Flat-woven Rugs.* Textile Museum, Washington, D.C. 1969.

[2] The ethnographic map, "Peoples of the Middle East", *National Geographic Magazine,* Washington, D.C., July 1972, reinforces this observation.

[3] G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate.* Chapter VII "Jazirah", pp. 101-114. Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., London. 1966 edition.

[4] Dr. Beattie records a variant spelling: Galajir. For the correct spelling and pronunciation of modern Turkish refer to the article by Walter B. Denny in this issue of the *Textile Museum Journal.*

[5] Terminology for weaving structures is based on Irene Emery, *The Primary Structures of Fabrics,* Textile Museum, Washington, D.C., 1966. Illustrations of the structures discussed here may be found in her section on plain weave and tapestry, pp. 76-90, extra weft patterning, pp. 140-143, and weft wrapped pile, pp. 218-228. I am deeply indebted to Irene Emery for her invaluable editorial assistance on this article.

[6] Diagram of many kilim variations as well as end and selvedge finishes may be found in Peter Collingwood, *The Techniques of Rug Weaving,* Faber and Faber Limited, London, 1968. However, the specific type of braiding recorded in this article is not found, but Figures 397, 398, pp. 500-502 illustrate related finishes.